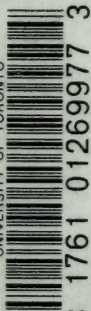


LORD KITCHENER

His Life and Work

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



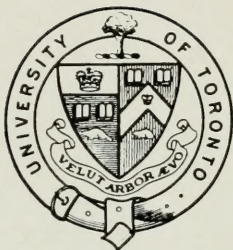
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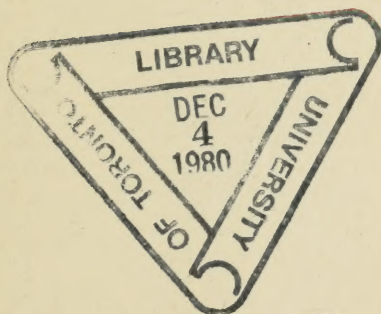
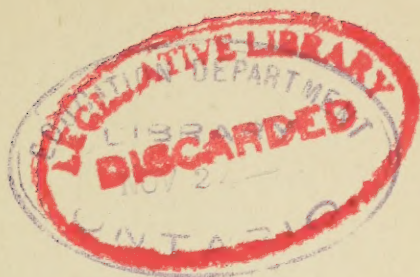
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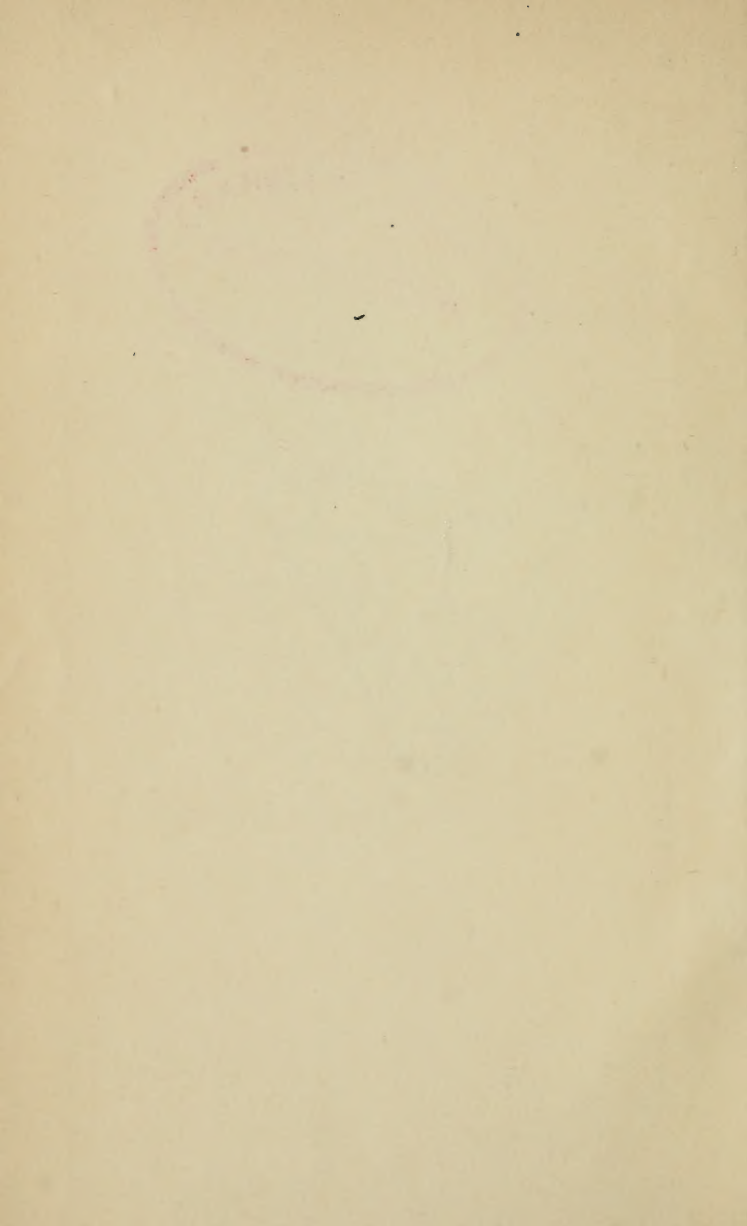



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LORD KITCHENER AND GENERAL JOFFRE

LORD KITCHENER

The Story of his Life
and Work

BY

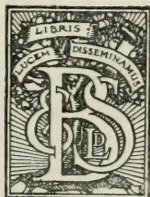
DONALD A. MACKENZIE

Author of "Heroes and Heroic Deeds
of the Great War" &c.

WITH TWELVE ILLUSTRATIONS

SUP

Kitchener, Lord



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PREFACE

The life of Kitchener is embraced in an epoch of European history which the Great World War brings to a close. "He belongs to history", a French poet has declared; "he entered it while still alive, there to remain for ever." His "baptism of fire" was received in the Franco-Prussian War, and it was directly due to the Russo-Turkish War, which resulted in the setting up of independent states in the Balkans, where the political influences of Austria and Russia were for a generation to quiver in the balance, that his genius for organization and administration was given a chance of development, especially in Cyprus and Asia Minor.

In Egypt, too, Kitchener figures in a distinct historical epoch. He entered that country, in a military capacity, immediately after the bombardment of Alexandria, of which he was an eye-witness; he took part in the stamping out of the Arabi Pasha rebellion; he assisted in the training and organization of the new native army, of which he became in time the Sirdar; he was associated with Gordon, the hero of Khartoum, and, as a soldier and administrator, he realized Gordon's ambition by reclaiming the Sudan from barbarism. After a brief but brilliant period of service as British Agent in Egypt, he took part, as a member of the British Government, in shaping the policy that finally freed Egypt from the thralldom of Turkey and ushered in a new age in the history of the ancient land of the Pharaohs.

Had Kitchener's services been confined to Egypt alone, they would have ensured his undying reputation as a great soldier and great administrator. With the progress of time, however, they became more universal. In South Africa he brought to a close a war which was followed by the union of two virile races; in India he did valuable and permanent work as a military

administrator and reformer; and in Australia and New Zealand he laid the basis of the organization of the citizen armies which have taken a prominent and distinguished part in the Great World War. Then ultimately, as British War Secretary, he performed his greatest work of all, for which his previous experiences and achievements now appear to have prepared and equipped him, by raising the strength of the British Army to a Continental level, and organizing it with masterful thoroughness and success. This development, which was accomplished in a comparatively brief space of time, is without parallel in the history of Europe, or, indeed, it may perhaps be said, of that of the world.

In the following pages the story of Kitchener's life and work is accompanied by historical notes, to assist the young reader in realizing the importance of this great man's services, not only to the Empire, but to the cause of civilization. Stories are told, which afford glimpses of his impressive and fascinating personality, and extracts are given from his writings and speeches that reveal his high sense of duty, his aspirations and principles, and his strong determination to overcome all obstacles in carrying out whatever task was set before him. Like Wellington, Nelson, Gordon, and Roberts, Kitchener possessed the quality called "personal magnetism", which attracted his fellow-countrymen during his lifetime, and will ever remain in the story of his career and in that of the Empire he served so loyally and well.

The early life of a great man is always of peculiar interest. It was in Palestine that Kitchener first displayed those qualities of mind and character which have made him so notable a figure in the history of his native land. In dealing with this interesting phase of a great career, the writer has drawn upon Kitchener's reports in the Quarterly Statements of the Palestine Exploration Fund (1877-9), when the future Earl Marshal signed himself "H. H. Kitchener, Lieut., R.E.", and Conder's *Tent Life in Palestine*. The story of his career in Egypt, and the account of the historical epoch with which he is associated in that country, are based on Lord Cromer's *Modern Egypt*, and other works which are acknowledged throughout the pages that follow.

D. A. MACKENZIE.

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LORD KITCHENER

CHAPTER I

EARLY DAYS

On a sunny forenoon in the early summer of 1862 a heavy ground swell was thundering round Banna-strand, on the south-western coast of Ireland. It was an impressive sight to watch the big Atlantic billows rolling shoreward and bursting in white foam over the ringing shingle and drenched sands, while spouts of spray were tossed high against the cliffs, spreading out, as they fell, like snowy fleeces, and the long, flat, brown tangle, which tellers of old tales call "mermaid's hair", now bubbled with brine, sparkling in sunshine, and now floated wide and free as the rocks to which they clung were submerged by the swelling waters.

Out among the billows, on a sloping bank of sand, several urchins of Banna were bathing in high glee. The boldest headed out to sea, swimming hard although slowly, to ride in on the giant rollers and scramble ashore through the weltering surf. It

seemed perilous sport, especially when the boys waited, standing waist-deep, for a big wave to surge over their heads, and then tried to swim through and against it. Some bobbed to the surface like seals; others rose spluttering and struggling confusedly to scamper up the sand and rest a while. Their shouts and laughter were heard at intervals along the resounding shore.

When the boisterous fun was at its height, three young lads, mounted on shaggy Irish ponies, came riding down to the beach. Having crossed seven miles of country from Crotta House, while scarce a breath of air blew over fields and moors drowsing in summer heat, the unexpected roughness of the sea astonished them greatly. The bathing urchins recognized the new-comers instantly as the three sons of Colonel Kitchener, a neighbouring proprietor, and raised derisive shouts as they dismounted and stood gazing at the breakers. "You're afraid, sure," called the youngsters of Banna. "Ride home again. If you come in to-day, it's drowned you will be."

The Kitchener lads pretended not to hear, and, having tethered their ponies, got into bathing costumes, ran down the beach, and entered the tumbling waters. Some of the Banna boys stood watching them from a distance, while others performed more daring feats than before, and then challenged the young gentlemen to rival them. Nor were they silenced until Herbert, the Colonel's second son, and the tallest of the brothers, had swum seaward a goodly distance with long, steady strokes, and displayed as much pluck and agility as any of the hardy

urchins. When he had returned to dry land, one of the Banna bathers now recalls, he stood for a moment or two with arms folded, gazing coldly at his rivals, as if to say: "What is there to make a fuss about?"

Master Herbert, as the future Earl Kitchener was then known, for he was never called by his first name, Horatio, was a shy, overgrown lad of twelve. He had been born at Gunsborough House, near the little town of Listowel, in County Kerry, but when quite a child had removed with his parents to Crotta House, which is situated in the vicinity of Ballylongford, several miles farther north in the same county.

His father, who served first in an infantry regiment in India and then in a cavalry regiment, was the son of a Leicestershire proprietor, and had married the daughter of the Rev. Dr. Chevallier, a clergyman in Suffolk, whose family came originally from the Channel Islands. Their children included, in addition to the three already named, the younger son, Walter, and the only daughter, Millie, who became Mrs. Parker.

After retiring from the army, Colonel Kitchener had purchased, in 1848, two years before Master Herbert was born, a large estate, at a comparatively low price, in the counties of Kerry and Limerick, and set himself to develop its resources to the utmost. He took in a good deal of waste land and made it suitable for cultivation. For the drainage of fields, tile pipes, he found, were both costly and difficult to obtain on account of the distances they had to be carried. Colonel Kitchener solved the problem by erecting a tile factory, and there not only manu-

factured pipes for his own use, but also drove a good trade by supplying them to neighbouring proprietors. He likewise established a pottery, to which, as to all his other interests, he gave close personal attention.

The Colonel was always working out new schemes to increase production on his land. The estate employees found him a stern taskmaster. He had no patience with idlers or with incompetent workers, and detested the easygoing ways of men who "took no thought of the morrow". One could tell by the manner in which his employees did their work whether he was at hand or not. When they felt his sharp blue eyes watching them they were more than usually active.

Like other boys, Master Herbert was inclined to imitate his father, and to look forward to the time when he would occupy a similar position in life. The idea of managing an estate and founding new industries appealed to him greatly. He was accustomed, when his brothers were at play—for athletics did not attract him—to wander about alone on the estate and watch all that was going on. He was interested in everything—the feeding of the cattle, the breaking-in of young horses, the trenching of fields, the manufacturing of pipes and pottery, and so on. The village blacksmith often looked up from his work to find Master Herbert watching intently how he fashioned horseshoes. He liked the lad because he was so anxious to know everything about a smith's business. "You're growing a big strong lad, sure," he said to him once. "Would you like to be coming here as my apprentice?" Herbert smiled. "No," he

answered in his quiet way; "but when I'm a man, and have an estate of my own, I should like to keep a dozen smiths employed always." "You'll do well, no doubt," declared the jovial blacksmith encouragingly, "for you're a smart-looking lad—smart as paint."

Colonel Kitchener, however, had cause about this time to think otherwise. Herbert was so much taken up with his dreams of the future that he neglected his school lessons. The master of the private school which the lad attended had reported unfavourably regarding him, and the Colonel said: "Herbert, if you do not pass your examination I shall have you sent to the Dame's school, where you will have to learn your lessons among your juniors."

The threat worried him, and he endeavoured to make up for lost time. But he found it impossible to overcome several months of neglected studies in a few days. The examination was duly held, and to his horror he found that he had failed. Accordingly his father, ever a man of his word, had him sent to the Dame's school, and warned him, saying: "If you fail again, sir, I'll have you apprenticed to a hatter. That's all you seem to be fit for."

The change of school was a severe punishment for a lad of spirit, but it had a good effect upon Herbert. He resolved to retrieve his reputation and follow his father's advice to "do the duty that is nearest to you first, and to do it thoroughly".

Ere long it was reported to the Colonel that the lad was making excellent progress, and showing a special aptitude for arithmetic. A tutor, under whom the

boys studied afterwards, expressed the opinion that Herbert was the cleverest of his pupils.

Colonel Kitchener decided in time that two at least of his sons, Herbert and Arthur, should enter the army, and a special course of studies was arranged for them. He thought at first of sending them to a public school in England, but decided instead that they should go to the Continent, with purpose, among other things, to improve their knowledge of modern languages. About a year after the occurrence of the bathing incident which has been related, the elder boys were accordingly sent to Grand Clos, Villeneuve, in Switzerland, where they lived under the care of their tutor, the Rev. J. Bennett, in a house overlooking Lake Geneva. The new life among glorious Alpine scenery delighted the lads greatly. They indulged to their hearts' content in climbing expeditions, in bathing in the lake, and in boating excursions. Their studies, of course, received close and constant attention; they improved their French greatly, and were able to converse with the natives, while they also made progress with mathematics and history, ancient and modern.

A few years later Herbert was sent to London to study under the Rev. George Frost, who resided in Kensington Square, for the entrance examination at the Royal Military Academy on Woolwich Common. Mr. Frost found him an apt pupil. When, in time, the examination was held, the future Field-Marshal passed with credit. On 31st January, 1868, he was formally enrolled as a cadet at "The Shop", as the academy is known in the army.

For two years Kitchener engaged in his military studies with diligence and thoroughness. He was noted among the other cadets for his ability as a mathematician. When ultimately he passed high in the final examination, having also impressed his examiners by his personal qualities, he was marked out for a commission in the Royal Engineers. At twenty he found himself waiting for an appointment to a suitable vacancy.

Ere he had entered the college his mother died, and his father, having sold his Irish estate, went to reside at Dinan, in Brittany, after marrying a second time. Kitchener spent his holidays at this new home. He had become a great favourite with his father, and the two were invariably found discussing military problems on their long walks together, or when they sat in the smoke-room poring over large maps, on which they reconstructed the famous military campaigns of the past.

The young soldier was in residence at Dinan when, in July, 1870, war broke out with dramatic suddenness between France and Germany over the question of the Spanish succession. One can understand the stir it caused in that military household. Father and son were decidedly pro-French in their sympathies, and young Kitchener, eager to gain practical experience in soldiering, volunteered for service in the French army. His offer was accepted, and he joined as an ordinary private in one of the battalions of Mobile Guard in the army commanded by General Chanzy.

At the beginning everything promised well for the French. They were the first to get their troops to the

frontier, but before long it became evident that their organization was faulty and their equipment painfully defective. In August, after sustaining serious reverses from the better-prepared and more fully-equipped German forces, the whole French line was in retreat along the western frontier. September opened with the disaster at Sedan, when the army of MacMahon was surrounded and compelled to surrender, the prisoners including 50 generals and 5000 other officers, and 84,000 of the rank and file. The most distinguished prisoner was Napoleon III, the French Emperor. Three weeks later the Germans had surrounded Paris and begun the famous siege of that city which lasted until February in the following year.

The army in which young Kitchener served moved northward to endeavour to break through the German cordon and relieve Paris. General Chanzy was unable, however, to achieve success. The complete breakdown of the French frontier defences had released masses of German troops for great sweeping movements, and the isolation of Paris was complete.

Kitchener had become a marked man in the force in which he served, on account of his personal valour and knowledge of military affairs. It is recorded that on one occasion he made a daring ascent in a war-balloon with a couple of officers, for the purpose of making observations, and helped to glean important information regarding the strength and movements of the enemy. After taking part in several engagements his military career in the French army was cut short by a severe illness caused by cold and exposure, and he returned to his father's house at Dinan.

An offer was afterwards made to him by the French authorities to accept a commission in their army. He felt himself compelled, however, to make a conditional refusal. "My first duty," he said, "is to my native land."

A French officer reminded him that he had taken up arms against Germany without first of all receiving the sanction of the home authorities, and that this would be regarded as a military offence. "It is very probable," he added, "you will be refused a commission in the British army."

"In that event," Kitchener is said to have answered, "I shall accept your offer. But I shall first of all apply for my commission at home in the ordinary way."

The Commander-in-Chief of the British army at the time was the Duke of Cambridge, and when it had been reported to him that Kitchener had served in a foreign army without permission from the War Office he took a serious view of his breach of discipline.

In after years the Duke related, in the course of a speech, that he had had the offender brought before him.

"What have you to say for yourself?" he asked, with a frowning face. "I hear, sir, that you have been fighting for the French."

Kitchener admitted his offence with frank politeness, and said: "Please, sir, I thought I should not be wanted for a time. I was anxious to learn something."

The Duke was attracted by the young man's

manner and military bearing. "I saw", he used to say, "that there was real grit in him, and decided he should have his commission."

Soon afterwards the future Field-Marshal was gazetted as a junior lieutenant in the Royal Engineers. In these days promotion was very slow and difficult to obtain. "I was a subaltern for twelve years," he reminded a friend, not long before his death, when commenting on cases of rapid promotion among officers in the new army which bears his name.

For three years he worked hard at home and won no mean reputation as a capable and painstaking officer. It was his desire, however, to go abroad, and his opportunity came when he was offered a post on the surveying staff of the Palestine Exploration Fund, which was engaged in preparing a new map of the Holy Land for the benefit of students of Biblical history.

CHAPTER II

ADVENTURES IN PALESTINE

Not long after Lieutenant Kitchener, then in his twenty-fifth year, arrived in Palestine, he had a bathing adventure which was more stirring than any he had experienced at Bannastrand or in Lake Geneva.

Early in April, 1875, the surveying-party, under command of Lieutenant Conder, R.E., was engaged in surveying operations on the maritime plain that lies between the Mediterranean and the mountains, and in the course of its duties visited the ancient



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LORD KITCHENER (seated) AT THE AGE OF 19
with his younger brother, the late Sir F. W. Kitchener

strongholds of the Philistines, whom the present-day inhabitants refer to as the "Fenish".

The rainy season was just over, and stormy days and chilly nights were succeeded by warm weather. "Spring flowers were in full bloom," wrote Lieutenant Conder; "the hoopoes and storks had arrived, and Palestine was at its best."

In three weeks the party had covered 180 square miles. As a rule they camped near the shore, always selecting a pleasant situation on the slopes of a small hill-side overlooking the fresh cornlands and beautiful olive-groves, or the undulating sandy downs that might take the eye of a golfer, and stretches of vivid green herbage dotted with patches of purple lupines. Many small villages could be seen all along the plain, some being adorned by clumps of stately palms. These, with their crooked, narrow streets and brown, flat-roofed houses built of rough stone plastered with mud, looked quaintly picturesque from a distance, although, as the travellers knew well, they were far from attractive close at hand, being so unclean and evil-smelling.

Several days of hot hazy weather came on, and the dry, burning east wind, known as "sirocco", blew steadily, rendering the hours of work unpleasant and the nights uncomfortable. The party suffered much from thirst and headaches. Often the blue Mediterranean looked so cool and inviting along the sloping shore that the young officers were tempted to bathe. They found that a little swimming exercise refreshed and strengthened them greatly.

When they were camping near the village of Mejdal, which is situated close to the ruins of the old Philistine

town of Ascalon, they were able to enjoy a bathe daily. One forenoon, however, Lieutenant Conder found that even the tideless Mediterranean is not without its perils for swimmers. The sirocco was more than usually strong, and the shallow waters round the shore were much disturbed. Kitchener had swum a little distance away, and Conder, delighted with the coolness of the water, became somewhat venturesome. Suddenly he found himself in difficulties. "The surf was breaking," he has told, "and a strong suck back of the waves carried me out into the broken water, whence I was rescued by Lieutenant Kitchener."

Kitchener had just looked round, and, perceiving his friend was in danger, struck out boldly to assist him. Conder was vainly endeavouring to turn shoreward and found his strength ebbing away. Fortunately Kitchener reached him just in time. Supporting him with his left arm, he struck out with the right and brought him to the shore in safety.

"I should have drowned but for you," Conder exclaimed gratefully, as he lay down to rest. It was well for him that his friend had had experience in his boyhood of the rough seas at Bannastrand.

On a later occasion Conder again owed his life to Kitchener. This was during their sojourn in Galilee, when the party suffered attack from a mob of fanatical natives led by a sheikh, who seemed determined to take their lives.

It should be explained here that there are three distinct classes among the modern inhabitants of Palestine. There are the *fellaheen*, "ploughmen",

who live in the villages and cultivate the soil; the *belladeen*, "townsfolk", who dwell in cities; and the *bedaween*, "Arabs of the Arabs", who move about from place to place and dwell in tents and in caves.

The fellah of Palestine has been characterized by Mr. Tyrwhitt Drake, whom Kitchener succeeded on the survey-party, as "the worst type of humanity in the East. He is", this writer says, "totally destitute of all moral sense; he changes his pledged word as easily as he slips off his *abba* (cloak); robbery, even when accompanied by violence and murder, is quite in his line, provided he can do it with little fear of detection. To one who has power, he is fawning and cringing to a disgusting extent; but to one whom he does not fear, or who does not understand Arabic, his insolence and ribald abuse are unbounded." When well treated and looked after, however, the fellaheen, to give them their due, make industrious and capable workers.

The belladeen are of mixed descent, and, being chiefly traders, are more peacefully disposed to strangers than the villagers; while the bedaween have the hardy desert virtues of all wandering Arabs, including that of hospitality. They have also the usual desert vices, for many of them are little better than highwaymen.

Among the fellaheen there is a saying which runs:

"What is the townsman? The Sultan of the world. What is the Fellah? The donkey of the world. What is the Bedawy? The dog of the world, for he snatches from everybody; but nobody dares to snatch from him."

The fellaheen are divided into clans which are ruled

over by hereditary chiefs called "sheikhs". These sheikhs have always been given recognition by the Turkish Government, but they had to be responsible to governors, who could punish them, if necessary, by fines and imprisonment. Clan fights between the fellaheen were, until recently, very common. Cases are recorded in which opposing bands have committed their cattle to the care of Palestine Fund explorers before beginning to fight, returning for them afterwards. They have learned to trust our people. So convinced are they, indeed, of the integrity of the British that the "English word" or "promise" is "synonymous for truth". When a peasant is driving a bargain he will sometimes be heard exclaiming: "Stop arguing; I give you the English promise which cannot be broken".

It was owing to the treachery of a party of these fellaheen that Lieutenant Conder nearly lost his life. It happened that an epidemic of cholera was spreading rapidly through northern Palestine. Lieutenant Conder, in consequence, decided to move southward with his party, consisting in all of five Europeans and ten native Christians, and conducted a long and difficult march to the little town of Safed, in Upper Galilee, which is situated on a mountain ridge and overlooks a picturesque lake. The concluding part of the journey entailed a climb of about 2000 feet, and the men and their beasts of burden were greatly wearied.

A camping-ground was selected under a shady clump of olive-trees on an uncultivated patch of ground to the north of the town, and not far from the Moslem quarter. Lieutenant Conder, as his custom

was, sent his letter of recommendation to the local Turkish governor, and asked for a few soldiers to act as camp guards and a couple of armed mounted men to accompany the party while it engaged in the usual work of surveying.

It was a pleasant evening, and a cool, refreshing breeze rippled through the olive-trees. Kitchener had undertaken to overlook the camping arrangements, and Conder, who felt unwell—he was in for a spell of malaria although not aware of it—had got into his slippers and was resting on his camp-bed. Suddenly he was roused by the sound of angry voices. At first it occurred to him that his servants were bargaining with natives in the usual noisy Eastern fashion. But certain expressions he heard astonished him greatly, and he rose and looked out of the tent. Much to his surprise he observed a sheikh, who wore a gorgeous turban and a white *abba*, “cloak”, throwing stones at one of the servants named Habib. A crowd of natives looked on. He learned afterwards that the sheikh, a somewhat insolent fellow, had walked up to Habib and begun tugging at the tent he was erecting. At the same time he abused him and his masters: “I have seen many dogs like you before,” he snarled. “Do you hear me?—Christian dogs, I say.”

At first Habib treated the interruption good-naturedly, but, missing a revolver which had been hanging on a branch of an olive-tree, he asked sharply who had taken it. The sheikh answered defiantly with a curse and a further reference to Christian dogs, and then began to fling stones. Meanwhile poor

Habib stood with arms outstretched, appealing to the onlookers to bear witness to the unprovoked attack.

This undignified sheikh, whose name was Aly Agha Allân, was a tall, slim man of middle age. He had worked himself into a passion, and made use of much bad language. Thinking it was possible to pacify him by speaking a few conciliatory words, Conder walked towards him quite unarmed. But before the Lieutenant could open his mouth Agha sprang forward, and, clutching his throat with both hands, shook him fiercely, muttering curses the while. Thinking the man was demented, Conder knocked him down. He expected to see him retiring as soon as he picked himself up, but instead the sheikh came forward again, holding his left hand behind his back. It was not until Conder struck down the treacherous fellow a second time that he discovered that his left hand grasped an evil-looking dagger. Had the officer hesitated to strike, Agha would certainly have stabbed him.

By this time all the servants of the party had hastened forward. Without waiting for instructions they at once seized the sheikh, took away his knife, which had a blade twelve inches long, and bound his arms with a rope. Agha was greatly infuriated by this indignity, and called out several times in a loud voice: "Where are my young men?"

When he uttered this ominous exclamation several members of the crowd at once turned away and ran towards the town, with the purpose, as it transpired, to summon the sheikh's warriors. Most of those who remained began to shout at the camp-servants all

kinds of evil nicknames, being aware that they were Christians.

In the midst of the hubbub Conder ordered that the sheikh should be released. But his action did not pacify the crowd, and dozens of stones were pitched into the camp.

Turning to Habib, Lieutenant Conder ordered him to hasten to the Governor's house. The crowd hustled the servant, however, while the sheikh shouted orders to them. Another camp-servant, a long-legged mule-driver, was asked by Conder to steal round the opposite side of the hill and run as fast as he was able to inform the Governor of what was happening.

Kitchener, who had come forward with the others, endeavoured also to pacify the crowd, but without success. He was able, however, to hold back the servants, who were extremely anxious to fight, and he had to snatch from a groom a gun which he was trying to load.

By this time the onlookers had increased from a few dozens to about 300, and stones of all sizes came showering constantly into the camp, which was being gradually surrounded.

Kitchener was struck several times, but maintained his composure, and took charge of one part of the camp while Conder looked after another. The officers refrained from using fire-arms, and continued their efforts to pacify the noisy crowd. The sight of a Turkish policeman who arrived on the scene was welcome to Conder, but the fellow conducted a hurried retreat without attempting to do anything when he perceived how serious the trouble was.

Ere long Agha's young men for whom he had sent came running down the hill-side towards the camp, amid loud cries raised by the unfriendly mob.

The sheikh's retainers carried an assortment of arms. One, a negro slave, had pistols in his belt, and brandished a naked scimitar; he kept shouting and leaping fantastically as he ran. Others had carbines, daggers, and clubs, and one swung aloft an old-fashioned battle-axe. Kitchener and Conder realized at a glance that the whole party were in imminent danger of their lives.

Two men ran at Conder, the one with the battle-axe and another with a club, cursing him the while loudly and fiercely. His composure, however, astonished them so much that they suddenly came to an abrupt stop. Thrusting aside the long battle-axe with his cane, Conder stepped boldly forward, and, clutching the warrior's arms, swung them round, exclaiming sharply in Arabic: "Go away; don't be foolish!" The men at once slunk away through the astonished crowd.

For a moment it looked as if the cool and plucky British officers would overawe Agha's fighting-men. But one, bolder than the rest, raised a rifle to his shoulder and aimed point-blank at Conder, who then thought it best to retreat to his tent with as much dignity as possible.

The situation was growing more grave every moment, but Conder, despite the peril that threatened all, could not help laughing heartily when he observed one of his party, an army sergeant, standing prepared to receive an attack, although armed with nothing more deadly than the legs of a camera.

Kitchener and the native servants were by this time confronted by the main body of the retainers, and Conder hastened to the support of his friends. As he walked up, a native darted out of the crowd and struck him on the forehead with a nail-studded club, inflicting a wound from which blood streamed down his face. In another moment the same fellow attempted to strike a second blow, which would have brained Conder, but that he ducked, and received it on the back of the neck. He fell to the ground, and the native servants shrieked, thinking he had been killed.

"As soon as I got up," Lieutenant Conder has related, "I dealt this man a blow in the face with the handle of my whip which staggered him, but the whip flew out of my hand and left me entirely unarmed. I must inevitably have been murdered but for the cool and prompt assistance of Lieutenant Kitchener, who managed to get to me, and engaged one of the club-men, covering my retreat. A blow descending on the top of his head he parried with a cane, which was broken by the force of the blow. A second wounded his arm. His escape is unaccountable."

As Conder stood by his tent, having his wound bound, an evil-looking fellah ran towards him with a big stone, intending evidently to dispatch him without further ado. A servant thrust a rifle into the Lieutenant's hands, and when he raised it the fellah scampered away.

The attack had now lasted about half an hour, and there was still no sign of help coming. Observing

that the crowd was gradually surrounding the camp, Conder therefore cried out to Kitchener: "We must bolt;" and Kitchener nodded assent. Accordingly the party fled towards a slope a few hundred yards distant, running through prickly thistles and climbing stone walls.

Then suddenly, as they reached a place of temporary safety, Conder missed Kitchener, and, greatly alarmed, began to run back to look for him. He had lost his slippers, and his feet were pierced by many prickly thorns. Kitchener had held up the crowd as long as possible, so as to enable the others to escape safely. Then he turned to run also. As he did so one of the sheikh's retainers fired a rifle. Fortunately he aimed too high, and the bullet whizzed over Kitchener's head like a bee in flight. When Conder caught sight of Kitchener he was dodging his assailant, who was attempting to strike him with the scimitar, but turned back at the sight of Conder.

For a few minutes the party stood on the hill slope looking anxiously round about, and wondering what next they should do. The mob had grown silent, and the reason for this became at once apparent when a body of soldiers accompanied by the British Consular Agent made appearance, marching towards the camp. Every weapon was immediately concealed by the sheikh's retainers, and the crowd began to melt away.

Conder and Kitchener and the others returned at once to their tents. It was found that almost every member of the party suffered from injuries. Conder had two wounds on his head, and his neck was badly swollen, while Kitchener complained of painful bruises

on his left thigh and left arm. A native groom had to have a large head-wound stitched, and a boy was in a state of collapse.

A patrol armed with rifles was left to guard the camp, and its members had to keep a sharp look-out during the night, for the sheikh, before returning to Safed, threatened to come back in the darkness and cut the throats of the whole party.

Next morning Conder and Kitchener bade good-bye to Safed. "We cannot", Kitchener wrote home to the Committee of the Palestine Fund, "take the responsibility of conducting the party again into the field till a severe punishment has been awarded to the inhabitants of Safed, and until the steady advance of the cholera is checked. I feel certain that neither of these obstacles will be removed under two or three months."

Three days after the attack Conder, who suffered greatly from his injuries, his head being so stiff with the swelling of his neck that he could not move it, was stricken down with a sharp attack of malaria. He was conveyed to the convent on Mount Carmel for treatment. Kitchener, too, took ill shortly afterwards. He had already had two attacks of fever since joining the survey-party.

After making good recoveries, both officers remained in Palestine to push on the prosecution of their assailants. They found it difficult to persuade the Turkish authorities to act promptly, but in the end the chief offenders were brought to trial. Aly Agha Allân was sentenced to nine months' imprisonment, and his negro slave to two years, while the town of

Safed was ordered to pay out of the taxes the sum of £270 to the Palestine Exploration Fund.

It was not until 1877 that Kitchener again visited Safed. He was then in charge of the surveying-party, Conder having remained in London on account of the state of his health. The entry into the town of the future Field-Marshal was a triumphant one. A peaceful and friendly crowd assembled in the streets, and the governor hastened to meet and bid him welcome. The repentant sheikh, who had been by this time released from prison, bowed abjectly several times and offered the most profuse apologies, calling himself by various uncomplimentary names. There were grim smiles on the faces of the onlookers, for the heavy fine on such a poor town had destroyed the prestige of the sheikh, and instilled in every mind a wholesome respect for the tall British officer who during the camp scrimmage had held at bay the boldest of the local fellaheen warriors.

In the next chapter an account will be given of Kitchener's experiences of his first command. He displayed in Palestine those qualities for organization, hard work, and diplomacy which afterwards won for him world-wide fame. The Holy Land proved to be a real training-ground for him as a commander. He was given an opportunity at any rate to distinguish himself there, and took full advantage of it.

CHAPTER III

HIS FIRST COMMAND

It has been customary to write of Kitchener as "a cold, solitary man", an "emotionless human machine", a soldier with "stern, sphinx-like face", and so on. Such exaggerated expressions have tended to convey a one-sided impression of the great man. The shyness and reserve of his boyhood never left him, but, although he was distant, he was not unsympathetic; in fact, he was a man of deep feeling, and one who showed himself ever ready to appreciate merit in others. He could be generous to a degree. One of his outstanding characteristics was his keen sense of duty. He performed whatever he had to do with thoroughness and efficiency. Being a capable and far-seeing organizer, he made excellent plans, and he had the will and ability to see them carried out.

Kitchener was always a busy man. He was ever, in the familiar phrase, "up to his ears in work", and when he had work to do he had no time for anything else. Off duty, however, his friends never found him either distant or self-centred. "All I can say", wrote a friend who accompanied him in Palestine, "is that he was as good company as a man could wish to have, full of life and high spirits." Others have borne testimony to his sociable qualities in his later days. Among friends he was a ready and pleasing talker who could give vivid and entertaining accounts of his experiences in various parts of the world.

There were traits in Kitchener's character which were rarely observed outside his circle of intimate friends. He was more sensitive to criticism, especially unfair criticism, than was thought by many, and his sympathy with one who had been wronged was spontaneous and deep. Near relatives only were aware of the wealth of his affections, and of his generous impulses, and of his deep appreciation of real friendship. The strong, resolute man was also keenly responsive to all that was beautiful in colour and form. In his English home he took much delight in his roses—the rose was ever his favourite flower—and his collection of beautiful old china.

His letters from Palestine afford many glimpses of the inner man. They were written in the direct lucid style of a clear thinker and accurate observer, and have occasional poetic touches. His descriptions of the Lake of Galilee are as characteristic as they are interesting. The following is an extract from one of his ordinary official reports:—

The scenery of the lake is hardly what would be expected of a basin 685 feet below the sea-level. The hills on the eastern side have an almost perfectly level outline, scarcely broken by any valley of importance, and decidedly monotonous in appearance; still, the bright sunshine throws a rosy haze over the country and the contrast with the bright blue water is very beautiful.

The best views of the lake are from a distance on the many heights from which it is visible; as thus seen in the evening it is particularly lovely. Deep blue shadows seem to increase the size of the hills, and there is always a rosy flush in the sky and over snow-clad Hermon.

Writing later, he recorded his impression of the famous lake in moonlight:—

There is a great charm in that dry and thirsty land in having a vast expanse of water spread out before the eyes, and at night the effect of the moon in Eastern brightness, shining on the calm lake, was exceedingly beautiful.

The poetry of the Bible appealed to him. Commenting on "the magnificent song of Deborah", he quotes in one of his letters the well-known passage from the description of the great storm that "swelled the Kishon": "They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera" (*Judges*, v, 20).

Then he writes:—

The season was probably that of the autumn storms which occur early in November. At this time the meteoric showers are commonest, and are remarkably fine in effect, seen in the evening light at a season when the air is specially clear and bright. The scene presented by the falling fiery stars, as the defeated host fled away by night, is one very striking to the fancy, which would form a fine subject for an artist's pencil.

That consciousness of high purpose which pervaded his life is made evident when he wrote regarding his work in Palestine:—

We hope to rescue from the hands of that ruthless destroyer, the uneducated Arab, one of the most interesting ruins in Palestine, hallowed by the footprints of our Lord. I allude to the synagogue of Capernaum, which is rapidly disappearing owing to the stones being burnt for lime.

Ought we not to preserve for ourselves and our children buildings so hallowed, so unique? Let us hope that, if this expedition succeeds, it may be the means of leaving some footprints on the sands of time:

Footprints that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, may take heart again.

One of the first glimpses we have of him in Palestine is of homely character. He arrived at the camp, as a friend has recorded, "with Habib the groom, the little dog 'Looloo' and her new puppy, and the baggage". The dogs were kept to detect and scare off thieves by night, and included the fox-terriers "Tom" and "Jack" in addition to "Looloo" and a favourite old collie quaintly named "Tarbush".

The party lived mostly in tents and enjoyed few luxuries. Kitchener grew a long beard, and was sometimes, especially when he donned Eastern costume, mistaken for a great sheikh, his face being bronzed with constant outdoor life on the plains and among the mountains. "We none of us thought much about our toilets," a fellow-explorer confessed, "and he least of all. Why, after a few months' travelling about in Palestine he looked more like a tramp than an officer of Her Majesty's army. His clothes wouldn't have fetched a threepenny bit at any 'old clo'' shop in Whitechapel."

He always carried a camera and took many photographs, a selection of which was published in a volume sold for the purpose of raising money for the Palestine Fund.

The natives interested him greatly. He studied their character and ways of life, and as he acquired an excellent knowledge of Arabic, in which he could ultimately talk with fluency, he was able to converse with them with a degree of familiarity that few Europeans could in these days assume. His understanding of the Eastern mind served him in good stead in after years.



1751
LORD KITCHENER AS A YOUNG OFFICER
OF THE ROYAL ENGINEERS

The work in which he engaged was arduous and monotonous, and especially so when he became the leader of the expedition. Like his father on his Irish estate, he proved a stern taskmaster, and he did not spare himself.

In collecting accurate data for the new map of Palestine on a scale of one inch to a mile, he had to take note of every natural feature, mark every ruin, field, tree-clump, and village. It was important to ascertain correctly the native place names, and check those appearing on previous maps, many of which were either wrongly placed or inaccurately spelled. His work was, although laborious, most thoroughly carried out. This fact is illustrated by the trouble he took over a river ford named "Abarah". "We have collected", he wrote, "the names of over forty fords, and no other is called Abarah; nor does the word occur again in all the 9000 names collected by the survey-party." One can imagine him spending hours over the imposing lists of place names before making so definite a statement.

In a lecture delivered to the geographical section of the British Association he referred to the painstaking character of the work as follows:—

Each surveyor had a guide with him who gave the names of the different places. The surveyor wrote them down as near as he could to the sound, and on returning to camp he repeated them in front of the guide and the scribe. The guide then pronounced the names correctly, and the scribe wrote them down for him. I afterwards translated the Arabic in accordance with Robinson's method, and the proper spelling was thus obtained and written on the map. . . . One of the greatest values of the map is the number of unknown names it has made public: thus,

on this part of the survey (Galilee) 2770 names were collected, only about 450 of which are to be found on the best existing map of the country.

Palestine is a country of high mountains intersected by twisting valleys, fronted by a maritime plain of varying breadth, and cut through lengthwise by the deep Jordan valley, which descends to about 1300 feet below the sea-level. There are fertile districts, grazing slopes, patches of barren desert, and desolate imposing hills which are snow-capped in season. The climate varies in localities at different times of the year from burning tropical heat to extreme Siberian cold.

Kitchener had to endure many hardships in all weathers while travelling through this strange and historic land. He suffered several attacks of fever, had a spell of snow-blindness, and once was a victim of sunstroke. Yet, despite all drawbacks of climate and difficulties experienced on account of the uncertain political conditions, he completed his work with characteristic thoroughness in less than the time-limit he had himself set.

After his experience at Safed he took sharp measures in dealing with rude sheikhs. Once at the village of Shakra, in Galilee, a sheikh threw stones against an inscription he was engaged in copying. He left off work, went straight to the governor, and had the sheikh imprisoned. He then departed for a time, and on his return finished the work. Having experienced no further interruption, he had the humbled sheikh released, and saw him leave prison a sadder and wiser man.

The outbreak of war between Russia and Turkey unsettled the country a good deal. Kitchener was greatly concerned regarding the native Christians, who were thrown into a state of alarm and unrest. They feared that if the Turks suffered defeat the Moslems would take revenge and massacre many of them. All the regular Turkish troops had left for the seat of war, and the bedaween were raiding actively in some districts and plundering the fellaheen. One chief of bedaween had a force of no fewer than 4000 spearmen. Sensational rumours were being constantly passed from mouth to mouth, and there were occasional spells of panic among the villagers, and especially the Christian villagers. Many of the people thought the war was a religious one—Moslem against Christian—and not merely Turk against Russian.

In some places the fellaheen threatened Kitchener and his party, but stern measures were taken to prevent any repetition of the Safed affair. Here is a significant record from Kitchener's pen:—

Our next camp was at Meiron, where we were received very cordially, owing to the governor of the district, who accompanied us thus far, informing the villagers that if we were not well treated in everything he would come next day and burn the village down.

The village was visited annually by many pilgrims, who held a fête lasting three days. It was celebrated during Kitchener's sojourn there. The Governor attended with a guard of soldiers to preserve order; Arabs infested the roads, and those caught attacking pilgrims were shot at sight. Feasting, dancing, and

singing were kept up for hours on end, and Kitchener was a spectator of a great orgy held one night, which he described as follows :—

The men kept up an incessant din with rude instruments and singing; they ran round and round in circles, holding each other's hands and occasionally throwing up their arms; they were all dressed in dirty, long dressing-gowns and huge felt hats. Lit up by the blazing torches they had the most grotesque appearance. The contrast between all these excited Jews, some of them apparently intoxicated, and the solemn, unmoved serenity of the Turkish governor and officials, sitting on their mats smoking, was very striking.

Afterwards the survey-party engaged in work in the vicinity of some Christian villages. The inhabitants, greatly alarmed by rumours of impending massacres, were preparing to leave their crops and belongings and seek refuge in Tyre, but they were reassured by Kitchener, whom they welcomed effusively. After listening to his advice, they decided to remain in their homes under his protection.

A visit of bedaween Arabs to one Christian village passed off without serious incident on account of Kitchener's presence. The chief's son was ill, and a pilgrimage had just been paid to the tomb of Joshua, where it was hoped a miraculous cure would have been effected. Kitchener gave the lad medicine, and he had a speedy recovery. The Arabs were, in consequence, deeply grateful and very friendly. In one of his letters Kitchener refers to this incident as follows:—

I had a goat killed in their honour, which made us the best friends, and they kept up dancing and singing round fires in front of our tents all night. The men went through the usual

war-dance, imitating the attack and defeat of an enemy, to the accompaniment of clapping hands; but what was more curious was later in the evening, when two of the prettiest women were called out by their husbands and went through a very peculiar and very graceful dance with swords; they were unveiled and looked quite handsome by the firelight. Having rewarded them with lumps of sugar, I left them singing songs in our honour. Next morning they were all gone, having left pressing invitations for us to visit them. Two days later the chief came to thank me for the medicine I had given his boy.

What Kitchener accomplished in the interests of the native Christians has never been adequately recorded. He makes only passing reference in his letters to some of the diplomatic actions, and says nothing regarding the strong representations he made to the various Turkish governors. When he lectured to the Geographical Association of the British Association Major Wilson, C.B., however, spoke regarding what he had done on behalf of the native Christians, and said:—

Lieutenant Kitchener has omitted to mention, through modesty, the difficulties he had to surmount owing to the country being at war. From private information I have received from the Consuls in Palestine, I can assure the meeting that the tact and energy displayed by Lieutenant Kitchener in protecting the Christian population greatly tended to the preservation of peace in that country.

One obtains vivid glimpses of the resolute Kitchener, who could overcome difficulties and face perils, in his records of the last few months of his work in Palestine. Here are some characteristic extracts:—

We had to work hard; the water was so bad, being salt, and the colour of weak tea, and our bread all went mouldy.

Everyone was very full of the danger of going to Beersheba,

but I found no Arabs within five hours of the place. In fact, everyone is so afraid that no one goes there.

From Beersheba I had to take my camels by force, as those that brought us wished to desert and leave us there, in which case we might be there now.

If anyone asks you, I believe myself safer than before the war, as there are so few young men in the country; extra precautions are now necessary against thieves, as deserters are hidden about in all the hills and in caves, and make raids in the night-time.

In October, 1877, the Palestine survey was completed, and, after revising some earlier work, Kitchener prepared to leave for home. At Jerusalem he had quite an imposing little ceremony to go through in connection with his activities regarding Jacob's Well, which he had repaired and surrounded by a wall. He wished to secure for all Christians the right to visit it, and to set up a notice-board in English informing his countrymen where the gate key could be obtained. Elaborate negotiations had to be gone through, but at last the Greek Patriarch received him with due honour. "It was his fête day," Kitchener wrote, "and he held a reception of all the Greek community. I was treated with the greatest civility, chair and carpet in church, and a seat next the Patriarch above all the bishops in reception." He was already showing promise as a diplomatist.

The excellent work, carried out with the minimum of expenditure, which Kitchener performed in Palestine was much appreciated and generously acknowledged. "I was very much gratified", he wrote, "at the way the Committee mentioned my work at the general meeting."

In his final report there is quite a Kitchener

touch. Having thanked the Committee for their kindness and indulgence, he said:—

During that very critical period when Turkey was at war, the confidence placed in me by the Committee enabled me to carry out the survey in my own way, when, had it been necessary to apply home for detailed directions, I should very probably not have succeeded in the enterprise.

CHAPTER IV

IN CYPRUS AND ASIA MINOR

When Kitchener returned to London, where he spent several months completing his work on the great map of Palestine, the war between Russia and Turkey was waging furiously. The Turks had set up a stiff resistance at first, but they were gradually worn down and forced to retreat southwards through the Balkans. It seemed certain that the Ottoman kingdom would be broken up. Serbia and Montenegro had joined in against the Sultan's forces, and were fighting for complete independence. There was every promise, too, that Bulgaria would be freed from Turkish oppression. That unhappy country was unable to fight for itself. Before the war broke out it had suffered terribly. Bands of irregular Turkish troops had swept through it to terrorize those who cherished hopes of liberty, burning many villages and slaughtering in cold blood thousands of men, women, and children. These Bulgarian atrocities, which had horrified and startled all Europe, were, indeed, one of the causes of the war. Russia was the real liberator of Bulgaria.

We can understand with what keen interest a born soldier like Kitchener followed the course of the war. Soon after he reached home the Russian troops, which had occupied Sofia, were threatening Adrianople, while the Tsar's Caucasian army, having overrun Armenia, pressed towards Erzerum, a town that was already doomed to fall. Terrible sufferings were being endured by all the belligerents, for the winter was exceptionally severe. In the forced marches and retreats through the snow thousands of lives were lost owing to exposure and lack of fuel.

The people of Great Britain were divided in their sympathies. One section favoured Turkey, fearing that if it suffered overwhelming defeat the Russians would seize Constantinople and afterwards take possession of Asia Minor. The other section believed in the good faith of Russia, and hoped to see Turkey completely crushed, so that it might be reformed from within and the small Balkan nations set free from its yoke. Prior to the outbreak of war, Mr. W. E. Gladstone had championed the cause of Bulgaria and advocated that the Turks should, "one and all, bag and baggage. . . . clear out from the province they had desolated and profaned". Thomas Carlyle, then a powerful influence, although not a professional politician, had gone even further. "The only clear advice I have to give", he wrote, "is that the unspeakable Turk should be immediately struck out of the question and the country left to honest European guidance." He considered that Russia's mission in the world was "to drill anarchic populations into order".

Those who feared Russia, on the other hand, believed that the Tsar's Government had designs on India, nor could they be convinced by Mr. Gladstone that this was, as he called it, "a perfectly chimerical idea". They wished to retain Turkey as a "buffer state", and some went the length of advocating that Britain should go to war to prevent Turkey's complete ruin. Divided counsels within the ranks of the Government added to the general unrest. When the British fleet was ordered to enter the Dardanelles and proceed to Constantinople, so as to protect British citizens there, two members of the Cabinet threatened to resign, and the order was cancelled. Ultimately, however, a strong British squadron did enter the Sea of Marmora and cast anchor some miles distant from the Turkish capital. By that time, however, an armistice had been arranged between Russia and Turkey, and the Tsar's Government shortly afterwards agreed to the settlement of the Balkan question at a conference of the European Powers. The conference met in due course at Berlin and arranged a Treaty which established the independence of Montenegro, Serbia, and Bulgaria, and placed Bosnia and Herzegovina under the protection of Austria.

As it turned out, Kitchener was personally affected by the final settlement, and especially by a secret convention arranged by Lord Beaconsfield's Government between Britain and Turkey. This convention provided that Britain should protect Turkey under certain circumstances. When Lord Salisbury succeeded Lord Derby as foreign secretary, he declared that "if Russia made any further attack on Asiatic Turkey

we should undoubtedly defend these dominions". One of the conditions of the Convention was that Britain should occupy Cyprus.

Now, no reliable map of Cyprus existed at the time. It was necessary, therefore, that the island should be surveyed, and Lord Salisbury selected Lieutenant Kitchener, whose work in Palestine had attracted so much attention, to prepare a new and accurate map.

On 10th September, 1877, Kitchener formally handed over the great map of Palestine, with all the memoirs, plans, and sketches that had been prepared, to the Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund, which passed the following resolution:—

The Committee desire to express their grateful thanks to Lieutenant Kitchener for the way in which he brought the survey of Palestine to a successful termination, and congratulate him on his appointment to the very important work of a similar nature which has been entrusted to him by the Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

Kitchener put off no time in taking up his new duties. Nine days after the date of the committee meeting he left London for Cyprus.

The island had been formally occupied by the British early in July. At the time there was still a possibility that our country would be involved in war. Our reserves had been called up some months earlier, and the Indian Government had sent to Malta eight native regiments with artillery and a body of sappers and miners. When, therefore, Lord Hope, the admiral commanding the Channel Squadron, which was at the time in the Mediterranean, received secret orders to sail eastward, it was first thought that the

war-vessels were being sent to Constantinople. It transpired subsequently, however, that the mission of the squadron was to take over Cyprus from the Sultan.

First of all, the island was surrounded by British vessels. Then the Admiral, whose flagship was the *Minotaur*, put into Larnaca Bay, and sent ashore an officer to interview the Turkish Governor there. It transpired that the authorities in Cyprus had received no orders regarding the transference of the island from Constantinople. The British Admiral, however, could not suffer delay. He had received his orders, and it was necessary for him to carry them out.

No trouble was experienced at Larnaca. The Governor, who was an indolent man, allowed the bluejackets to land and erect a pier and hoist the Union Jack without protest or hindrance. The sight of British guns made him very polite.

All was well so far. But the Admiral considered it to be his duty to take possession also of Nicosia, the capital, which lies twenty-one miles inland from Larnaca. It was enclosed by a wall, protected by forts, and the governor had under his command a small force of soldiers. He might possibly, it was thought, show fight when the British arrived. The Admiral, however, hit on an amusing and subtle plan. Knowing that the officials and soldiers had not received their salaries for several months, and that merchants were also waiting for the Turkish Government to pay its accounts, he sent word ahead that he was coming to settle all arrears. Then he had one or two mules laden with bags of new sixpences. A force of marines and bluejackets set out early one morning to

march to the capital, and when they were half-way on their route the Admiral passed them, driving in a wagonette which rumbled and jolted along the rough road through clouds of dust. The mules were trotting behind with their loads of money.

Nicosia was greatly stirred by the news that the British Queen had sent one of her "Pashas" to settle all debts, and when the Admiral arrived he received a warm welcome. The marines and bluejackets were also greeted with enthusiasm, and the Turkish soldiers ran out to meet them with cups of coffee, jars of water, and fruit. That evening the Turkish flag was lowered with military honours and the Union Jack hoisted instead. All the Turkish soldiers gave up their arms and went about happy and smiling because they had received their full pay. Many could be seen admiring the bright new sixpences in their open palms, and pointing out with delight the head of their new ruler, the great British Queen Victoria.

When Sir Garnet Wolseley arrived with a strong force of British and Indian troops he found the island people quite reconciled to the change of government. The Turkish officials who came to inform the island authorities that the Sultan had handed Cyprus over to the British were surprised at what the Admiral had accomplished.

Many changes had to be carried out by the British. Sleepy Cyprus soon discovered that our officers meant business. The streets had to be cleaned, and the custom of slaying animals in them was brought to an end. Quite good laws were in existence, but they had never been put in force in right manner, for the

officials, including the judges in the courts, could be bribed, and the poor people were unable to secure justice. When a merchant or money-lender wanted to collect his accounts he took out a summons, which cost about twopence, and got the judge, who received what he called his "fee", to order that the money should be collected at the public expense. Men who owned bits of land were often ruined by dishonest rogues, for, after being sued in court, they lost all they possessed. There were always disputes about property, and it was almost impossible to find a peasant who knew exactly where his own field ended and that of his neighbour began.

It was necessary to settle all differences regarding property in land, and to organize the courts so that the existing laws might be properly administered. Kitchener was employed to carry out a good deal of this important work. He helped to organize the courts and to settle disputes about boundaries. As he could speak Arabic, and was as firm as he was fair, he soon became very popular among the people. He understood them, and they found him very just and very sympathetic and patient. Often when two men were disputing fiercely, and seemed ready to fly at one another's throats, he would settle all their difficulties in a short time, and leave them contented and quite good friends again.

All the roads were rough and primitive. They had to be gradually repaired and extended, and new roads were also made. Kitchener, who began to survey the whole island with the same care and thoroughness as he had displayed in Palestine, had much to do in

improving the means of communication. He was kept very busy for about a year, when he was suddenly called away to take up other duties and leave the work of survey unfinished for a time.

Sir Charles Wilson, of the Royal Engineers, had been appointed British Consul-General in Asia Minor, and he asked the Foreign Secretary for Kitchener to help him. That part of the Turkish Empire was in a terrible state of confusion and distress after the war with Russia. The people who had fled from Erzerum and the towns and villages near it were gradually returning to their homes. Almost all were reduced to sore straits, and numbers were dying of starvation. Besides, the country was infested by robbers, and the roads were unsafe by day as well as by night.

Kitchener spent nearly two years in Asia Minor helping to bring about settled conditions once again. The work required a great deal of organization. Thousands of sufferers had to be housed and fed and helped to start life anew, and lawlessness had to be put down with a firm hand. To this day the peasants of Asia Minor remember with grateful hearts the good work done on their behalf by the British officers. The Turkish Government was profuse in its thanks when the country was settled and the people returned to their old ways of life and had no further reason to dread the approach of winter. The Sultan gave Kitchener, as a reward, a permit which allowed him to visit the holy places in the Turkish Empire. He had only to show it to make friends with Moslems, the Sultan being the protector of the Mohammedan faith. In after days this permit, called a "firman",

was utilized by Kitchener in the Sudan when he moved among the people disguised as a native. It was the means of saving his life on more than one critical occasion.

After finishing his work in Asia Minor, Kitchener returned to Cyprus and resumed his duties there as chief of the survey-party. The great island, which is situated about 60 miles from the coast of Asia Minor and about 40 from the coast of Syria, is 141 miles long, its greatest breadth being 60 miles. When Kitchener prepared his map, on a scale of one inch to a mile, he worked out the area of the island at 3584 square miles, or a little more than the area of Norfolk and Suffolk combined. The population at the end of 1912 was estimated at 282,388, exclusive of military, about a fourth being Moslems and the rest being Christians, chiefly of the Greek Church.

Cyprus remained nominally a Turkish island until 5th November, 1914, when, owing to the hostile acts committed by the Sultan's forces, under German officers, against the Allied Powers, Great Britain declared war against Turkey. At the same time there was issued a British Order in Council which announced that "the island of Cyprus shall be annexed to and form part of His Majesty's dominions, the Convention of 4th June, 1878, having become annulled by reason of the outbreak of war between this country and Turkey".

In the summer of 1882 Kitchener obtained leave of absence and visited Egypt, where important events were about to take place. The air was filled with rumours of war, and British and French war-

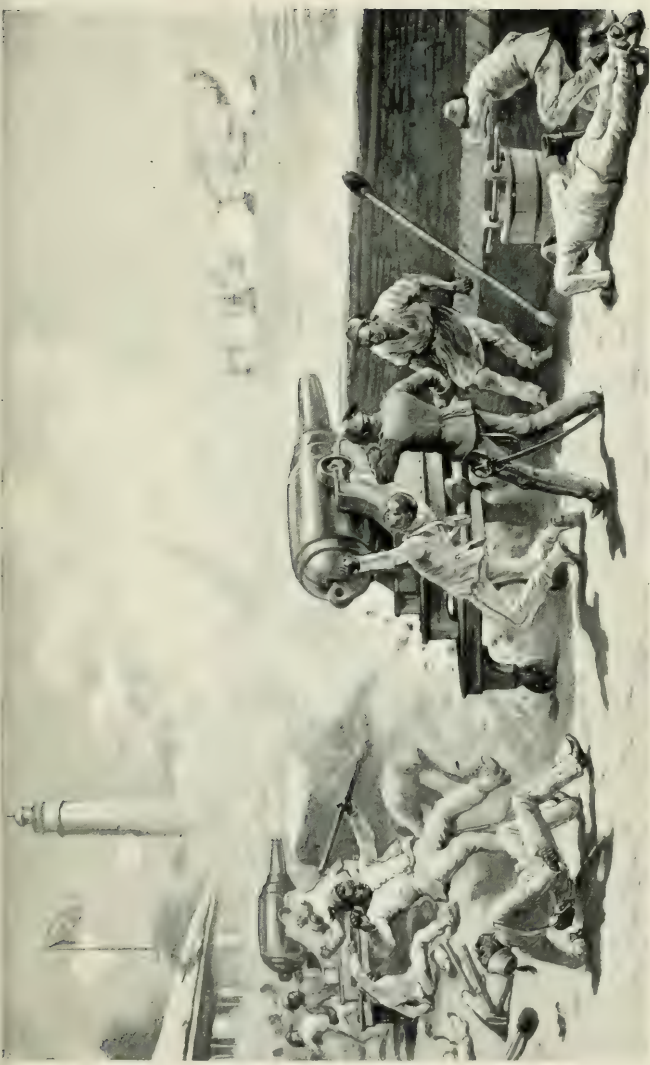
ships were lying off Alexandria. Thousands of Christians were leaving Egypt daily. The hour had come, and with it the man! No one dreamed, however, that the man whose name was to be so closely associated with the history of the new and reformed Egypt was the tall, silent lieutenant who had come from Cyprus on holiday, and was in the early days of July telegraphing to his superiors for extended leave of absence, having learned that the bombardment of Alexandria must inevitably take place.

CHAPTER V

THE CALL OF EGYPT

When Kitchener telegraphed to Cyprus for extended leave of absence he had arrived at Alexandria. There had been serious rioting in that historic city, the name of which celebrates the ancient glory of its founder, Alexander the Great. Many Moslems and Christians had been killed and injured.

A great crisis was fast approaching. The rioting was one of the results of the political unrest which was spreading rapidly all through Egypt. A Nationalist party had been formed. It desired, among other things, to throw off the yoke of Turkey, which received a large sum annually as tribute, and establish an independent Egyptian Government. Many of those who supported the movement had also dreams of seizing the possessions of others, including the land owned by Turks and Christians. Some spoke



THE BOMBARDMENT OF ALEXANDRIA BY THE BRITISH FLEET

of cancelling all existing mortgages and all debts owed to banks and money-lenders, and even of refusing to acknowledge the liability of the National Debt which had been incurred by the Government of the Khedive.

The military leader of this party was the clever and ambitious officer and politician, Arabi Pasha. He served in the Khedive's Government as Minister of War, and, having won to his side the officers of the Egyptian army, became for a time a military dictator. A plot was being fostered in the army to depose the Khedive and appoint Arabi, or some other Nationalist, as Governor-General. The Khedive found it necessary, in the end, to leave Cairo, the capital—where Arabi assumed supreme control—and seek refuge in Alexandria.

Day after day the stream of refugees increased in volume. Not only Christians fled, when law and order began to show signs of collapse, but also peaceful Arabs and Turks with their families.

Arabi grew bolder as the days went past. He issued orders to strengthen the forts at Alexandria and erect new earthwork batteries so as to be able to fight the war-ships on equal terms and prevent the landing of troops. The Sultan of Turkey was informed of this, and forbade the work to proceed; Arabi obeyed at the time, but a few weeks later had the work resumed.

War seemed inevitable, and Kitchener, who had received extended leave of absence, was more than ever anxious to remain at Alexandria. His extra holidays were, however, near at end before the climax came. He was expected to leave Egypt on 7th July.

On 3rd July, 1882, Admiral Sir Beauchamp Seymour (afterwards Lord Alcester) sent an ultimatum to the commander of the forts. It conveyed a threat of bombardment if the work of strengthening the defences was not brought to an abrupt close. He had received instructions from the British Government to do so, and if he was disobeyed "to destroy the earth-works and silence the batteries if they opened fire". The day fixed for the threatened bombardment was 11th July.

Kitchener, having ascertained that this ultimatum had been sent, took the advice of a friend, and telegraphed to Cyprus for further leave of absence. "I am afraid", he remarked, "it will not be given."

That evening the weekly mail-boat to Cyprus was due to leave. Would a reply come in time? As he had added to his telegram, however, that if he was not answered he would take it for granted the extra days were granted, he hoped for the best. The hours went past, and no message was delivered to him, and at length he watched, with satisfaction, the Cyprus mail-boat taking its departure.

It appears, however, that although he had not received a telegram, one did arrive in good time. By chance it had been handed to a newspaper correspondent, who, knowing that Kitchener was anxious to remain, thrust it into his pocket with a smile. He waited until the Cyprus steamer had left, and then approached Kitchener. Handing him the telegram, he apologized for being the cause of delaying its delivery. Kitchener tore it open, and found it contained a curt request to leave Egypt at once. Being

unable to obey this order, as he would have done had he received it in time, he telegraphed to Cyprus explaining the circumstances. He thus obtained another week's grace.

The British ultimatum was expiring, and still the workmen on shore continued busily mounting guns and throwing up earthworks. A denial from the commander of the forts that the work was being continued was received by Admiral Seymour, who had only to raise his glass to see that this was quite untrue.

The French Government refused to take part in an attack on the forts, and ordered its war-ships to proceed to Port Said and protect the canal.

At seven o'clock on the morning of the 11th—a beautiful Egyptian summer morning, with a clear sky and a peaceful sea—Admiral Seymour signalled from his yacht to the commander of his flagship, the *Alexandra*, to fire a shell into a new earthworks known as “Hospital Battery”. The battery replied promptly, and then the whole British fleet, consisting of eight large and five small war-ships, went into action. All the forts on shore opened fire, and ere long dense masses of smoke drifted across the bay, and the thundering of guns sounded far and wide.

It was difficult for the spectators on vessels lying out to sea to follow the course of the bombardment. White columns of water that sprang up round the war-ships showed that the Egyptian gunners were responding. The British gunners had difficulties also in aiming on account of the smoke. Occasionally, however, the dense dark clouds broke and lifted, and

revealed the forts, on which rapid and terrible showers of bursting shell were falling. It was an awe-inspiring spectacle. Now and again the ships were struck, but their thick armour protected them well. The sun rose high and the heat became very great. Bluejackets were stripped to the waist, and worked with great vigour, and the Egyptian gunners were also very active, and, without doubt, courageous as well.

From the beginning it was evident that the war-ships would achieve a complete success. One by one the forts were silenced, their walls being shattered and guns thrown down by the pounding shells. In three forts the magazines were exploded, and great columns of smoke and debris rose in the air.

By noon the worst of the fighting was over, and an hour later a party of bluejackets and men landed from the *Invincible* at one of the forts which had ceased firing, and, entering it, blew up with gun-cotton the guns that had escaped damage. They found the fort quite deserted.

Other forts and earthwork batteries kept up a faltering fire during the afternoon, and the action did not come to an end until about 6 p.m. The sea-front was then a mass of ruins.

Kitchener had the privilege of watching the bombardment from H.M.S. *Invincible*. One of the officers of that vessel was a personal friend, and obtained permission for him to be on board. Twenty-seven shells from the Egyptian forts struck the *Invincible*, but no great damage was done, and only six men were killed. Kitchener had a narrow escape in the forenoon. A shell went hurtling through the air over his

head, and he was thrown down on the deck by the rush of wind it raised. It afterwards struck and killed a seaman.

Kitchener was beside the gun on the *Invincible* which fired the last shot of bombardment. "About six o'clock in the evening", an eye-witness has related, "the white flag was fluttering from every one of the Egyptian forts, and the signal went up from the Admiral's yacht for the general cease fire. It so chanced that on board the *Invincible* one big gun remained loaded and laid. At that time it was not possible to unload these guns without considerable damage, and Kitchener's friend therefore asked permission to discharge the piece. The necessary signals were exchanged, the permission granted, and as a natural consequence every glass in the fleet was riveted on the point of objective".

Kitchener was wont to conclude his account of the incident in this way: "It was a beautiful shot. It fell straight and true in the very centre of the works against which it was directed. But when the cloud of rubble, dust, and debris had subsided, an old Arab woman tottered out of an outhouse to the scene of the wreckage and drove in some fowls!"

In after days Kitchener often chaffed his friend the naval officer about the trouble he caused to the old Arab "hen-wife" when he fired the "last shot".

During the bombardment the Khedive's palace was set on fire by the rebels and burned furiously. When darkness came on the lurid flames reddened the sky. Part of the city was also in flames, the work, as it

afterwards transpired, of the Egyptian soldiers and the mob of city and desert ruffians.

Next morning there were signs of activity in one or two of the forts. The Egyptians had started to repair damages and clear the debris from about guns that had escaped destruction. One or two of the war-ships, however, opened fire with such deadly effect that the workers fled.

Meanwhile a great fire in the city was spreading rapidly. Suleiman Pasha, a confederate of Arabi's, had had the prison opened and allowed the criminals to escape and join the mob which was engaged looting and burning in every street. A number of Europeans were murdered, but some who escaped to the shore were rescued by boats from the fleet. As the Egyptian soldiers retreated they pillaged and set fire to houses like the escaped criminals. Arabi Pasha had some time previously made large purchases of petroleum, and considerable quantities of it were used to hasten the destruction of the city by fire.

Suleiman Pasha stood smoking coolly as he directed the operations of the fire-raisers, and on the very spot where he so behaved he was afterwards publicly hanged.

Early on the Thursday morning Admiral Seymour landed a force of marines and bluejackets to police the city and scatter the mob of looters and fire-raisers. The "handy men" did their utmost to put out the raging fires as speedily as possible, and in time were successful. Complete order was restored in the city.

All British officers and soldiers who happened to be in Egypt were meantime called upon to take up duty.

Thus came Kitchener's opportunity, and he welcomed it with feelings of relief and satisfaction. He could not now return to Cyprus even if he wished to. There was great need in Egypt for British officers able to speak Arabic, and he was one of the few who was thus equipped.

Before the end of the month the British Government decided to send a strong force to Egypt under the command of Sir Garnet (afterwards Lord) Wolseley, with purpose to support the authority of the Khedive and suppress the Arabi Pasha revolt.

A vigorous campaign followed, and it lasted for less than four weeks. Its object was to reach and take possession of Cairo. Arabi Pasha, who had a strong army with a good deal of heavy artillery, did his utmost to prevent the advance. Earthworks were thrown up at Kafr Dowar, which commands a narrow neck of land between two lakes, a few miles inland from Alexandria, and on the railway line to Cairo. He took it for granted that the British army would attempt to force its way through to the capital in this direction, and Sir Garnet, who had arrived at Alexandria, allowed him to think so for a time, and kept up continuous skirmishing between the lakes.

When, however, sufficient forces of British soldiers came overseas, Sir Garnet suddenly departed from Alexandria, leaving a small but sufficient army behind to hold back the enemy, and proceeded with war-ships and transports to Port Said. Then he passed through the Suez Canal and landed his force at Ismailia. Troops from India, Cyprus, and Malta reinforced his army at this point. From Ismailia, which became

the chief military base, Sir Garnet pressed inland along the route of the railway and canal and captured first Mahuta and then Mahsameh, driving back Arabi's forces from strong positions.

Three days after Mahsameh was occupied a night attack, led by cavalry, was made upon Kassassin. Guided in the darkness by the flashes of Egyptian rifles and cannon, the Dragoon Guards and Household Cavalry charged the artillery, sabred the gunners, and scattered the infantry, which fled in confusion. The British infantry afterwards advanced in force, and another barrier on the way to Cairo was removed.

A fortnight later the Egyptians attacked Kassassin, but were routed and forced to retire on Tel-el-Kebir, which is situated in a fertile district several miles farther on.

On the morning of 13th September, 1882, the British army assaulted and captured the works at Tel-el-Kebir. Arabi Pasha had there entrenched the main force of his followers and thought himself secure. Sir Garnet planned a night advance. His troops went forward silently across the desert in the darkness. Not a word was spoken and no light shown. At dawn the British soldiers were within 1000 yards of the enemy, and, halting, formed into a great semi-circle round the Tel-el-Kebir lines. The attack began on the left, where the Highlanders stole up to within 200 yards of the Egyptian works before they were observed. Then a fierce fire opened, breaking the tense silence, and the British soldiers swept on like a torrent, the pipers playing merrily.

The dawn was brightening the eastern sky as the

storm of battle opened across the desert. A vigorous fire was kept up by the Egyptian artillerymen and riflemen, but nothing could withstand the rapid and overwhelming rushes of the British infantry. In the hand-to-hand fighting the Egyptians suffered terribly, and when the first and then the second line of entrenchments were carried, the rebels fled in confusion, followed by the cavalry and mounted infantry. Arabi Pasha escaped on a fleet Arab steed before the action was ended.

The victory of Tel-el-Kebir was a decisive blow, and Sir Garnet lost no time in following it up. His cavalry swept onward, clearing the way for the infantry, and next evening reached Cairo. There the Egyptian garrison at once surrendered.

It transpired that when Arabi arrived in the city from Tel-el-Kebir he was reviled by the people and pelted with mud and stones. He took refuge with the prefect of police, who promptly delivered him up, when called upon to do so by the Commander of the British cavalry.

On the 15th Sir Garnet Wolseley, accompanied by the Duke of Connaught, entered Cairo and was welcomed by cheering multitudes. Afterwards a British mounted column, nearly three miles long, rode through the streets to impress the natives, so that they might realize something of the might of Great Britain which supported the Khedive's Government.

The Egyptian forces in the vicinity of Alexandria surrendered their positions to the British soon after the battle of Tel-el-Kebir was fought, and the rebellion

thus came to an end. Arabi Pasha was, in time, tried and found guilty of taking part in the rebellion. He was banished to Ceylon, where he remained until May, 1901. Then he was allowed to return to Egypt, where he ultimately died.

When the Khedive returned to Cairo from Alexandria British troops lined the streets. Afterwards a great review was held, and 18,000 British and Indian soldiers marched past his palace. Law and order was completely re-established.

Kitchener, who served all through the short but brilliant campaign, had many opportunities of studying the methods of waging a desert campaign. He saw that many reforms were required. The brilliant uniforms of the British army were unsuitable for modern warfare. White helmets and white belts were too conspicuous on the sandy plains, and had to be stained with tea or tobacco juice. The red tunics faded in the sun and took on the dull colour of the desert, and the future use of khaki was thus suggested. There had been great difficulties about regular and adequate supplies of provisions and munitions. Arabi Pasha had control of the railways, and the British soldiers, who pressed inland from Ismailia, were often so short of food that for two or three days on end they had to live on biscuits and muddy canal water. Horses also suffered because of the want of forage. The wheeled vehicles that crossed the desert with supplies were unsuitable for such work, and could hardly be dragged through the loose sand. No camels had been provided, as should have been done. It was not until some railway engines

were shipped to Ismailia that the transport service was set in proper working order. Good work was done by the navy, which provided steam launches to ply on the inland canals.

This was the first war, it is of special interest to note, in which armoured trains were used. While at Alexandria, Kitchener took special interest in one which was fitted up under the direction of Captain Fisher (afterwards Lord Fisher), who came ashore with a force of bluejackets and marines. The engine and trucks of this naval officer's war-train were protected by sand-bags and armour-plating. All the trucks carried guns, and in one of them was a 40-pounder which proved a terror to the enemy.

After the Arabi Pasha rebellion had been stamped out it was found necessary to leave a British force of 12,000 men in Egypt to maintain the authority of the Khedive and suppress the risings of irregular troops, like the bedaween bands, which came out to plunder and rob when the country was in a state of unrest. Steps were also taken to raise and train a native Egyptian army, and Sir Evelyn Wood was appointed its Sirdar, or Commander-in-Chief. A number of British officers were selected to staff the new army, and Kitchener, with his knowledge of Arabic, was considered to be indispensable. He was placed as second in command of a force of Egyptian cavalry, and set to work with a will to train a very raw force.

It was not long before he attracted the attention of the authorities. Lord Cromer, then Sir Evelyn Baring, who was the British Consul-General in Egypt, remarked one day, when looking over a number of

official reports: "This Kitchener seems to have his finger in every pie. I must see him, and find out what he is like."

He sent for Kitchener, and afterwards said to a friend: "That man has got a lot in him. He should prove one of our best assets in Egypt."

His words were prophetic. The tall, silent officer—"He's quiet," his colonel used to say; "that's his way, and he's clever"—was one day to become known not only in Egypt, but throughout the world as "Kitchener the Conqueror".

CHAPTER VI

RISE OF THE MAHDI

The work of training a new native Egyptian army did not seem at the outset very promising. Many believed that the fellaheen would never make good soldiers, because they did not appear to have the physical courage of the desert-dwelling bedaween and the dark-skinned Sudanese. For long centuries these tillers of the soil had been oppressed by their rulers, and had no heroic traditions, like freemen elsewhere, to inspire them to perform brave deeds.

Kitchener and other British officers who were attached to the new army were of opinion—and events have justified it—that discipline and instruction would bring about a great change in the character of the peasant soldier. In ancient days the Egyp-

tians were splendid fighting-men, and had made conquests not only in the Sudan but also in western Asia. Their pyramids and other wonderful buildings are eternal proof of their genius for organization. What had been might therefore be again.

A war correspondent¹ has given us an interesting glimpse of Kitchener beginning his work with the raw troops. He accompanied Colonel Taylor and the future Field-Marshal one grey morning on a visit to a cavalry barracks. "We found", he has told, "some forty men waiting. I remember Kitchener's gaze at the slipshod group as he took his position in the centre of a circular space, round which the riders were to show their paces.

" 'We begin with the officers,' said Taylor, turning to me; 'we shall train them first, then put them to drill the troopers. We have no troopers just yet, though we have 440 horses ready for them.' "

The writer then describes how suitable officers were chosen. "They were to be tested in horsemanship. The first batch of them were ordered to mount. Round they went, Indian file, Kitchener, like a circus-master, standing in the centre. Had he flourished a long whip, he might have passed for a show-master at rehearsal. Neither audible nor visible sign did he give of any feeling aroused in him by a performance mostly disappointing and sometimes ridiculous. His hands buried in his trousers-pockets, he quietly watched the emergence of the least unfit. . . . In half an hour or so the first native officers of the new fellah cavalry were chosen. It was then that Kitchener made his

¹ Mr. John Macdonald, of *The Daily News*.

longest speech. 'We'll have to drive it into these fellows,' he muttered aloud."

Across the desert gazed the solemn Sphinx, as it had gazed for three or four thousand years. It had seen Egyptian armies, quite as raw, being trained in ages past, and had watched them returning, in time, as triumphant conquerors. It had seen Egypt flourishing under native rulers—the mighty Pharaohs of old. It had seen the invaders from distant lands who had come in turn to rule over the Nile valley—the Assyrians, the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans, and then the Arabian Mohammedans. It had seen, in the Middle Ages, Egypt becoming a province of Turkey; it had seen the Mamelukes,¹ the descendants of slave soldiers, sent by the conquerors of the land to overawe the natives, rising to become the aristocrats and rulers of the Nile valley and the Delta region. Napoleon had fought the "Battle of the Pyramids" in sight of the Sphinx, and had declared himself "Sultan of Egypt". But once again the Sultan of Turkey resumed position as overlord of the ancient land.

Soon afterwards there arose to power in Egypt the remarkable Albanian tobacco-merchant, Mehemet Ali, who was born in the same year as Napoleon and Wellington. At first he ruled for the Sultan, and then rebelled against him, conquered Syria, and threatened to march to Constantinople; but the Russians thwarted his design. Britain and France some time afterwards compelled Mehemet Ali to give up Syria and rule Egypt as the "Vali", or Viceroy, of

¹ A word signifying "slaves".

the Sultan of Turkey. Under him Egyptian trade prospered, but the fellaheen suffered great oppression. He had conquered the Sudan and founded Khartoum, which became a centre of the slave-trade.

Mehemet was succeeded in turn by his son Ibrahim and his grandson Abbas I. It was the latter who began the construction of the railway from Alexandria to Cairo. The next Viceroy was Said Pasha, a son of Mehemet Ali. He granted to a French company the right to construct the Suez Canal. His successor was Ismail Pasha, during whose administration Egypt became bankrupt. This Ismail was the first Khedive—a Persian title signifying “prince”. For the privilege of being raised by the Sultan to such a high rank he agreed to increase the tribute paid each year to Turkey from £60,000 to £665,000. This was but one of his many acts of reckless extravagance. He undertook a number of costly public works. “He wished”, Lord Cromer has said, “to introduce European civilization into Egypt at a rapid rate, but he had little idea how to set about the work. He had neither the knowledge nor the experience necessary to carry out the task.”

When Ismail began to rule, the National Debt of Egypt amounted to about £3,250,000, but he raised it to the overwhelming sum, for Egypt, of about £80,000,000. He was continually borrowing large sums. When he became hard-pressed for money he sold Egypt's shares in the Suez Canal to the British Government for about four millions sterling. To-day they are worth about five times that amount, and

draw in interest about £700,000 a year. During Ismail's reign the canal was formally opened.

The time came when the ambitious and extravagant Khedive found it difficult to raise enough money by taxation to pay interest on his loans. His tax-gatherers plundered the fellaheen, who were whipped on the soles of their feet if they did not deliver up their valuables. The people groaned and suffered under the tyranny, and when a low Nile caused a famine thousands died of starvation.

Some time after Egypt became bankrupt, and representatives of the British and French Governments were put in charge of the finances. Ismail had to be deposed, and his son Tewfik Pasha was made Khedive. During Tewfik's term the native army officers mutinied because of the favours shown to those of Turkish and Circassian birth and origin. At length came the rebellion headed by Arabi Pasha.

The British occupation of Egypt restored peace and good government. But a new trouble broke out in the Sudan, which was held in control by garrisons of native troops. There arose in that vast country a religious pretender named Mohammed Ahmed, son of a boat-builder of Dongola, who professed to be the Mahdi, or Messiah, of the Mohammedans. Orthodox Moslems in Egypt and elsewhere condemned him as a "Mutemahdi" or "False Mahdi", but great masses of the Sudanese believed in and followed him. He became the leader of a rebellion against the Egyptian Government, which was hated because of its oppressions in the past.

The Mahdi's army overran a great part of the Sudan



UNIT

BOSWELL

LORD KITCHENER AS MAJOR OF EGYPTIAN CAVALRY

(1882-1884)

and captured the town of El Obeid. General Hicks, known in Egypt as Hicks Pasha, was selected by the Khedive for the command of a force of about 10,000 of the old Egyptian army to wage war against the False Prophet. He was a veteran officer, but had no experience of desert warfare. The British Government wished the Sudan to be abandoned, and protested against the Hicks expedition, for which the Khedive's Government was entirely responsible.

Hicks Pasha met with disaster after passing south-westward from Khartoum and defeating the rebels at Jebel Ain. His orders were to reconquer the province of Kordofan, and he set out to march across the driest part of the Sudan. The guides who led the army were spies of the Mahdi, and they led it into a trap. For three days and three nights no water could be obtained, and many hundreds died of thirst. When at length this thirst-stricken force came into contact with the rebels at Kashgil, about thirty miles south of El Obeid, it was in no condition to go into battle with any hope of success. A mile distant from the camp there was a large pool of water, but the weak and suffering soldiers had no knowledge of it. The whole army was destroyed by the Mahdi's force, towards which it was guided. Hicks Pasha and his staff made a brilliant charge and died like true British soldiers.

When news of this terrible disaster, which took place on 4th November, 1883, was carried far and wide by Arab runners, many more of the Dervish tribes joined the Mahdi, believing he was indeed the True Prophet and conqueror. "It is the defeat of

Hicks", General Gordon declared afterwards, "which gave the Mahdi his great prestige."

Kitchener was in Sinai when he heard of the disaster. He had joined a Palestine Fund Exploration expedition which was under the direction of Professor Edward Hull, the geologist, and had charge of the topographical survey. "I was aware", the Professor has written, "of his great experience in such work, of his knowledge of the character and customs of the Arab tribes among whom we were to travel, and of his ability to converse in their language. All this inspired an amount of confidence of ultimate success, which I should not otherwise have felt. The result proved that my confidence was well founded. In matters connected with our dealings with the Arabs I readily deferred to his judgment, which I always found to be judicious, while he often acted as spokesman in our negotiations with the sheikhs."

Kitchener made use of camels, and has given an amusing account of his experiences with one of them. "Camels are bad beasts for survey work," he wrote. "I used to keep mine at a good trot for a bit, until he got cross, which he showed by roaring and then suddenly shutting up all four legs and coming to the ground with a thud, at the same time springing up again and darting off in an opposite direction."

The news about Hicks disturbed Kitchener greatly, and, believing more trouble was in store, he resolved to leave the party and return to Egypt. He set forth to cross the desert towards Ismailia, on the Suez Canal, on the last day of December, 1883, instead of travelling by the shore route. Three natives accom-

panied him on camels, while he rode an Arab steed. The journey was difficult and trying, "the most trying", he has told, "I ever experienced". He was determined, however, to push on, even although a sand storm was encountered in the last stage of the journey. "Two Arabs were sulky, and deserted," he has related; "however, we got the camels all right. Pushing on through a blinding sandstorm, over hill and valley, with only the compass to guide us, at four o'clock in the afternoon I saw Lake Tumah, and skirting the shore reached the ferry over the canal at dusk." From Ismailia he afterwards took train to Cairo, where he learned that the trouble in the Sudan was going from bad to worse. His services were offered readily, and he was given perilous and important work to do in the disturbed area.

CHAPTER VII

THE TRAGEDY OF KHARTOUM

The revolt of the Mahdi extended rapidly after the disaster to Hicks Pasha's force of Egyptian soldiers, and the problem of the future control of the Sudan became a very pressing one. The British Government, of which Mr. Gladstone was at the time Prime Minister, had no intention of sending out troops to fight Egypt's battles in the desert wastes, and advised the Khedive to abandon the Sudan. Egypt's new army was neither large enough nor well-trained enough to hold against a strong enemy the extensive area of

which Khartoum was the administrative centre, and the finances of Egypt were in such a state of confusion that a costly campaign was quite out of the question. One difficulty, however, remained to be dealt with, and that was the safe withdrawal of the garrisons from the various strategic points in the Sudan.

The problem of the future of the Sudan was widely discussed throughout Europe. It was recognized in this country that the prosperity of Egypt could not be assured if a hostile power arose in the disturbed area. The control of the upper waters of the Nile was necessary for the development of agriculture in Egypt. It was well known, too, by this time, that the Mahdi's ambition was to conquer not only the Sudan but also the whole of Egypt proper. If he were allowed to gain control of the Sudan, the trouble would not therefore come to an end. He must be held in check, if possible, to the south of Khartoum, which commands the junction of the Blue Nile and the White Nile.

A great newspaper agitation was got up in London to force Mr. Gladstone's Government to take immediate action. It was believed that the Mahdi's revolt could be kept from spreading if a strong and popular man were sent out to the Sudan, and the man who was favoured for this purpose was General Gordon.

This brave and noble-minded soldier, who had crushed the Tai-ping rebellion in China, and was popularly known as "Chinese Gordon", had already done notable work in the Sudan, where he acted as the Governor of Ismail Pasha, the Khedive, from 1874 till 1879. He took a most active part in suppressing

the slave-trade, and by his many acts of justice and his upright character won, to a most remarkable extent, the love and confidence of the oppressed natives, in whose best interests he laboured continually during his term of office. He also settled disputes between warring tribes and made friends with the chiefs, among whom for years his name was one to conjure with. It was believed that his personal influence in the Sudan would work wonders.

The revolt and mission of the Mahdi, however, had brought about a sudden change in the minds of the people who owed so much to Gordon. To many this False Prophet was the True Prophet of a new age, and they gave him their active support. Those who did not believe in him had cause to fear him when he became a successful conqueror, and were, in time, forced to fight on his side.

Gordon discovered ere long the true state of matters. He was sent out to the Sudan by the British Government in January, 1884, mainly for the purpose of reporting on the situation. Three months after his arrival in Khartoum he had to confess in an official letter: "My weakness is that of being foreign and Christian and peaceful". His influence over the masses of the people had to a great extent passed away.

The Khedive, Tewfik Pasha, had appointed Gordon Governor-General of the Sudan after he reached Cairo, and furnished him with proclamations, one of which informed the people of the south that it had been decided "to restore to the families of the kings of the Sudan their former independence".

Gordon changed his mind on more than one occasion regarding the manner in which the Sudan problem should be solved. He wanted Zobeir Pasha to be appointed Governor-General in succession to himself, although, before arriving in Egypt, he had recommended that he should be sent to Cyprus. This Pasha had been a notorious slave-dealer in the Sudan, but he possessed great influence with the people. Gordon believed that many of the tribes would support him if he was sent south to oppose the Mahdi. At the time Zobeir Pasha was at Cairo.

As has been stated, Gordon was sent to Khartoum to report on the condition of the Sudan. He was also asked to advise as to the best means of evacuating it. "When", Mr. Gladstone declared in the House of Commons,¹ "General Gordon left this country and when he arrived in Egypt, he declared it to be—and I have not the smallest doubt it was—a fixed portion of his policy that no British force should be employed in aid of his mission."

At first Gordon wished to visit the Mahdi and arrange matters with him, believing that if he were appointed Emir of Kordofan his revolt would come to an end. Before long, however, Gordon realized that the rebellion was of widespread character, and that the False Prophet would need to be crushed by force of arms. One of his proposals was to employ Turkish troops. "As a soldier", Lord Cromer writes,² "he could not brook the idea of retiring before the Mahdi. Moreover, as a civilized European, he winced

¹ On 23rd February, 1885.

² *Modern Egypt*, by the Earl of Cromer. London, 1908.

at the idea that a country in which some germs of civilization had been sown should relapse into barbarism." The British Government was opposed to the employment of Turkish soldiers on grounds of general policy regarding Egypt, and Lord Granville, Foreign Secretary, pointed out that the proposal was also "contrary to the views advocated by General Gordon on former occasions".

Meanwhile the Mahdi was winning more and more tribes to his cause, until at length Khartoum was completely isolated. Gordon was thus placed in a perilous position, but the gravity of the situation does not appear to have been fully realized by Mr. Gladstone and his Cabinet. Indeed, some were inclined to blame Gordon for delaying his retreat from Khartoum. One of his letters, dated 31st July, 1884, which reached Cairo, via the Red Sea port of Suakin, about the end of September, contained the following passage:—

You ask me to state cause and intention in staying at Khartoum, knowing Government means to abandon Sudan, and in answer I say, *I stay at Khartoum because Arabs have shut us up and will not let us out.*

By this time it had become clearly evident that a British relief expedition would have to be sent to the Sudan under the command of Lord Wolseley. This decision was come to somewhat late in the autumn of 1884. Khartoum had been besieged by the Mahdi's forces for five months before Lord Wolseley was instructed to move southward "to bring away General Gordon and Colonel Stewart". No further offensive operations were to be undertaken.

Kitchener had been attached to the Intelligence Department, and when Gordon was shut up in Khartoum he did his utmost to keep in touch with that doomed town. As an Intelligence officer he carried his life in his hands. Disguised as an Arab, with white turban and belted cloak, he moved among the tribes that sympathized with the Mahdi and was believed to be a great sheikh. He is said to have looked one, for he had grown his beard, and his face was deeply tanned by the hot sun. He spoke Arabic like a native, and as he carried the firman, granted him by the Sultan of Turkey, which gave him the right to visit holy places, under the name of "Abdullah Bey", he was believed to be a relative of the great Sheikh Abdullah.

One night Kitchener had a narrow escape at the hands of a British soldier. He had been making special enquiries and returned to the camp at Wady Halfa with information of great importance. Creeping up to a tent, he lifted the flap and looked in. A sentry raised his rifle, when he caught a glimpse of the big turbaned stranger, whom he mistook for an Arab, and exclaimed: "Halt, or I'll drill a hole through you!"

"Don't be a fool, man," the officer-spy replied in a low voice; "I'm Kitchener."

Before he arrived at the camp two prowling Arabs had been arrested. Kitchener knew who they were, and said to the sentry: "Keep an eye on these fellows. They are Dervish spies." Next morning they were shot.

As "Abdullah Bey", Kitchener was no ordinary

spy. He did excellent work as a diplomatist among the Sudanese tribes, and especially those in the eastern area between the Nile and the Red Sea. He interviewed many sheikhs on behalf of the Egyptian Government, and prevented them from joining the Mahdi. To the Mudir of Dongola he carried a gift of money, and, after a long interview, persuaded him to remain loyal to the Khedive. So successful was his mission that this native leader led an expedition against a force of the Mahdi's troops and defeated them at Korti. All the while Kitchener was collecting valuable information regarding the False Prophet and his military movements.

Mr. Bennet Burleigh, the war correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, set out about this time on a journey to the town of Debba, which lies about ninety miles south of Dongola, just where the Nile takes a sudden turn northward after flowing southward round the river loop from Abu Hamed. Here messages could be sent by the short overland route to Khartoum, across the bend of the Nile, which is shaped somewhat like the letter U tilted sideways, Debba being situated at one point and Khartoum below the other.

Burleigh was astonished and delighted to find Kitchener in Debba. "He gave me a hearty welcome," the war correspondent has related, "and added to my debt of gratitude by producing two bottles of claret—his whole store—which we most loyally drank at dinner. For weeks he had not heard the English tongue spoken, and he naturally was glad to see a countryman able to tell something of what was happening outside the Sudan." Here is Burleigh's im-

pression of the disguised officer: "In manner", he says, "he (Kitchener) is good-natured, a listener rather than a talker, but readily pronouncing an opinion if it is called for. All his life he has been *par excellence* a volunteer soldier—volunteering time and again for one difficult and dangerous duty after another."

It was from Debba Kitchener wrote some of his letters to the besieged British officers in Khartoum. "Can I do anything for you and Gordon?" he asked Colonel Stewart in one of these. "I should be awfully glad if you will let me know. The relief expedition is evidently coming up this way, but whether they will go by Berber, or attempt the direct road from here, I do not know."

He wrote on the back of a cipher message to Gordon on 29th August: "Lord Wolseley leaves London directly to take over supreme command. All well here. . . . No danger," and two days later: "I think an expedition will be sent across from here to Khartoum, while another goes with steamer to Berber. A few words about what you wish done will be acceptable."

Berber had fallen, and Kitchener was to have gone there, but the order to do so was cancelled in time. Had he ventured into the town he would have been made a prisoner without doubt, and promptly executed.

Gordon, in his *Journal*, complains that "Kitchener & Co." did not send him enough information about the relief expedition—information Kitchener was unable, in fact, through lack of knowledge, to supply.

Regarding one particular message sent by the

General, who, like himself, was an officer of the Royal Engineers, Kitchener wrote as follows to a friend: "I shall write nothing more to him except the purest official documents. It is very clear his liver is out of order to go and attack officers of his own corps like that. It is atrocious!" One can only add that the strain and anxiety of these critical days affected more than one gallant officer, and tended to produce occasional misunderstandings. No one laboured more in the interests of Gordon than did Kitchener, and Gordon was deeply grateful to him and held him in high esteem.

Early in November Kitchener managed to send to Khartoum some newspapers from home, and Gordon refers to the matter in his *Journal* as follows:—

A curious thing has happened: my friend Kitchener sent up the post: he wrapped the letters in some old newspapers (he gave me no news in his letter), the old newspapers were thrown out in the garden: there a clerk who knew some English found them blowing about, and gave them to the apothecary of the hospital, who knows English. The doctor found him reading them, saw date *15th September*, and secured them for me; they are like gold, as you may imagine, since we have had no news since 24th February, 1884. . . . Did K. send them by accident or on purpose?

Later in the same month Gordon wrote in his *Journal*: "I like Baker's description of Kitchener", and then pasted in an extract cut from General Baker's letter, which reads as follows:—

The man whom I have always placed my hopes upon, Major Kitchener, R.E., who is one of the few very superior British officers, with a cool and good head and a hard constitution, combined with untiring energy, has now pushed up to Dongola and has proved that the Mudir is dependable.

The reference is to Kitchener's interview with the Mudir, already referred to.

Further on Gordon wrote, with reference to the future administration of the Sudan:—

Whoever comes up here had better appoint Major Kitchener Governor-General, for it is certain, after what has passed, I am impossible.

It was from Kitchener that Gordon learned of the death of his colleague, Colonel Stewart. On 10th September this gallant officer and about forty others left Khartoum in a steamer. They passed Berber and Abu Hamed, but struck a rock sixty miles beyond the latter town. A number, including Stewart, landed, and were invited to a house where, owing to the treachery of a sheikh, they were all murdered. Those left on board the steamer were afterwards attacked, and of the entire party only fourteen escaped death, and these were taken prisoners.

Late in December Lord Wolseley's relief army had passed through Debba and reached Korti, where the Mudir of Dongola had defeated the Mahdi's troops. Wolseley divided his force, and sent one part, under General Earle, in the direction of Berber, along the great loop of the Nile, and the other, under General Sir Herbert Stewart, to cross the desert by the short route towards Metemma on the western bank of the Nile above Khartoum. When he reached the Nile near Metemma Stewart was to send Sir Charles Wilson with a small force on steamers to the besieged town.

Kitchener accompanied Stewart's force. He was

then Deputy Assistant-Adjutant and Quartermaster-General on the Intelligence Staff, of which Sir Charles Wilson was the head. A move was first made upon Jakdul, by a picked force of about 1300 men mounted on camels, with purpose to take possession of the wells there. The dry, silent desert was safely crossed to this point in a couple of days, and when the thirsty soldiers reached Jakdul they looked about them in vain for water. "Where, oh where, are the wells?" enquired everybody. They were not to be seen at first, till the Intelligence Department, in the shape of Major Kitchener, pointed out a steep wall of rock at the far end. "On peeping round this," relates a writer who accompanied the force, "we discovered a magnificent pool of water."

To this important strategic point the main force advanced soon afterwards. Meanwhile the Intelligence Department was kept busy. The desert had to be scoured for traces of the enemy—who might mass in force at any point—and to cut off supplies being sent southward to the Mahdi. In this work Kitchener was particularly active, both as a fighting-man and a spy. Several parties of Dervishes were taken prisoners, and a caravan carrying dates and munitions was broken up. Kitchener lived like a Dervish in a cave on a slope of rocky hill, and did his utmost to obtain news regarding the enemy.

A fortnight after Jakdul was occupied Stewart's force moved southwards towards the Abu Klea wells, which are situated about 150 miles from Korti and about 50 from Jakdul. To his intense disappointment, Kitchener received orders to return to Korti.

He had hoped to enter Khartoum and congratulate Gordon on his gallant defence. As it happened, however, he was instead to send from Dongola an official report detailing all he could gather from Arab runners regarding the fall of the doomed town.

Stewart's force of 7000 men had to fight a stiff battle on 17th January for the possession of Abu Klea wells, which are only two days' march distant from Metemma. It was there the British square was broken by a Dervish attack, and Colonel Burnaby, a gallant and adventurous officer, was killed. The wounded included Lord Charles Beresford, who commanded the naval contingent. The British troops were parched with thirst, but fought with great gallantry against superior numbers. Although one side of the square had to recoil about 100 yards, and many Dervishes got into the centre of the square, a determined counter-attack brought speedy and complete success. An ample supply of water was afterwards secured from the wells.

The next action was fought at Abu Kru, a stony upland near Metemma and Gubat. The British troops were again suffering from thirst, and when they sighted the Nile on their approach the glad cries of "The river! the river!" which broke from many lips cheered wounded and well alike. The Dervishes were scattered at Abu Kru, and our casualties were slight, but Sir Herbert Stewart was fatally wounded, and the command of the force passed to Sir Charles Wilson. Gubat was occupied, and the next move was to send a small relief force by river steamers to Khartoum to take away Gordon. This was on

20th January, and the defender of the doomed town was still alive; but his days were numbered.

In the long and brilliant story of British heroism there is no more touching picture than Gordon in Khartoum waiting day after day for the arrival of British troops. The town was surrounded by hordes of fanatical Dervishes who thirsted for his blood. Provisions ran so short that "the soldiers had to eat dogs, donkeys, skins of animals, gum, and palm fibre. Famine prevailed. The soldiers stood on the fortifications like pieces of wood. The civilians were even worse off. Many died of hunger, and corpses filled the streets—no one had even the energy to bury them."¹

Gordon, who was a soldier of sublime courage, did his utmost to encourage the soldiers and the people. He had no fear of death. "I would", he wrote in a letter to his sister, "that all could look on death as a cheerful friend who takes us from a world of trial to our true home." His chief concern was for the inhabitants of Khartoum, who were suffering the pangs of hunger and were threatened by massacre at the hands of the Dervishes. No wonder that his face became livid with anxiety and his hair turned a silvery white. No wonder, too, that the soldiers and civilians despaired of the British army coming to relieve the town, and that they began to speak of surrendering to the Mahdi on the best terms that could be arranged. Each day Gordon made answer to such proposals: "The soldiers must come to-morrow". To Bordeini Bey he added, on 25th January: "What more can I say? The

¹ Narrative of Bordeini Bey, in *Mahdism*, p. 166.

people will no longer believe me. I have told them over and over again that help would be here, but it has never come, and now they must see I tell them lies. If this, my last promise, fails, I can do nothing more." Then he turned to gaze, as he had often gazed, on the shrinking loops of the river, and across the sandy desert, striving to catch a glimpse of the British force which was to bring succour to Khartoum. Nor was help far off on 25th January, when Gordon made his last promise: "They must come to-morrow."

As has been said, Gubat was reached by Stewart's force on the 20th January. Next day four of Gordon's steamers arrived there bringing letters and the General's famous *Journal*. Two of the steamers set out to return to Khartoum on the 24th, loaded with provisions and ammunition, and carrying detachments of British and Sudanese soldiers. All went well until the 25th, the day of Gordon's last promise to the people of Khartoum, when one of the steamers struck a rock at the Sixth Cataract, with the result that there was a delay of twenty-four hours. On the 27th the steamers had got safely through the Shabluka Cataract, and Dervishes on either bank of the Nile were shooting at them continuously. In the afternoon an Arab shouted from the shore in a loud, clear voice: "Khartoum has fallen, and Gordon is dead". No one on board believed him—no one wished to believe him. Khartoum was now only a day's journey distant, and all were hopeful that on the morrow they would be welcomed by General Gordon.

In Great Britain, and indeed all over the civilized world, the news of the relief of Khartoum was being



1851

Chaskey Gouli

GENERAL GORDON

Governor-General of the Sudan, who perished at Khartoum

anxiously waited for. "Will the steamers arrive in time?" people asked of one another. Two contradictory messages had been received from Gordon at Gubat. One, dated 14th December, 1884, expressed his fear that the town would fall in ten days; another, dated 29th December, contained the cheering intelligence:—

Khartoum is all right. Could hold out for years.

Those who based their belief on this second message that "all was well" did not realize at the time that it was intended to mislead the enemy should it fall into their hands.

Early on the morning of 28th January the steamers set out at full speed towards Khartoum, and about eleven o'clock the first glimpse was caught of the town from a distance of ten miles. It soon became evident that the rescue-party was too late. Thousands of the Mahdi's troops swarmed on the river banks and on islands, and opened fire with their rifles. The Egyptian flag no longer fluttered over Government House. Suddenly, as the steamers sped on, two guns in Khartoum and four in Omdurman began to shell the steamers, happily without doing damage. No doubt could remain regarding Gordon's fate, and the steamers had at once to put about and descend the river at their highest speed.

"Too late" was the sad message that afterwards flashed over the telegraph wires far and wide. "Khartoum has fallen", people repeated one to another in sorrow and dismay, "and Gordon is dead." Queen Victoria was grief-stricken by the news. "She was

going out when she received the telegram", Sir Henry Ponsonby, the Queen's private secretary, has related, "and sent for me. She then went out to my cottage, a quarter of a mile off, walked into the room pale and trembling, and said to my wife, who was terrified at her appearance, 'Too late!'" The whole Empire lamented with the Queen the "cruel though heroic fate" of General Gordon.

Two days before the steamers arrived off Khartoum the Mahdi's troops broke into the town, and the ten months' siege came to an end. It has been stated that a traitor, Faragh Pasha, an ex-slave whom Gordon had set free, caused the gates to be opened for the attackers. Sir Reginald Wingate, however, holds that "Neither treachery in the besieged nor the stratagems of the besiegers caused the fall of Khartoum. The town fell through starvation and despair at long neglect. There were no elements of chance in the expedition to relieve General Gordon. It was sanctioned too late."¹

The garrison set up a feeble resistance, and the Dervishes swept through the streets and massacred thousands. Gordon met his death in front of his office, where he stood calmly fronting the fanatical followers of the Mahdi, who rushed forward crying *Malaoun, el-yom yomak*, "O cursed one, your time is come!" One hand was on the hilt of his undrawn sword; in the other he held a revolver, which he did not use. He received in quick succession two spear-wounds, and died, as he had lived, a true British hero.

¹ *Mahdism, &c.*, p. 156.

Gordon was not only a great soldier but a very remarkable personality, and his death was lamented by supporters and critics alike with a keen sense of personal loss.

The army felt its honour was at stake, and every heart burned to avenge his death. At home many urged that the campaign should be continued until the power of the Mahdi was finally shattered. But other counsels prevailed. On purely military grounds, apart from those of policy, it became necessary to order a general retreat. The column under General Earle, who was killed in a successful action, did not press on as far as Berber after Khartoum fell. Supplies threatened to run short at Korti, the base. The soldiers' uniforms were also much worn, except those of the Royal Irish, which had been supplied with what a contemporary writer referred to as "hideous khaki tunics". General Sir Redvers Buller conducted the retreat of Stewart's column, and then the combined forces moved northward, until at length a defensive position was taken up at Wady Halfa. For nearly thirteen years the Mahdist power was to be supreme in the Sudan.

Kitchener went southward to Gubat with Buller and rejoined the Intelligence Staff attached to the desert column. Colonel Willoughby Verner, with whom he was closely associated at the time, was much impressed by the young officer's knowledge, military insight, and strength of character. In a recent issue of the *Nineteenth Century and After*,¹ Colonel Verner says: "What struck me was his most

¹ August, 1916.

thorough grip of the whole difficult problem before us, and the extraordinary ignorance in many of those around us of the factors governing the military situation”.

The retreat was not without its perils. The Mahdi was anxious, indeed, to surround and cut off the British column. Kitchener was kept well informed by his spies regarding the movements of the enemy, and did not conceal his anxiety. He was particularly anxious to have the wells at Abu Klea blocked up so that the Mahdi's troops should not be able to assemble there in force and obtain sufficient water to enable them to keep in touch with the retreating column. Buller, however, would not consent to such a plan. First, Colonel Verner appealed to him. Buller “replied that destroying drinking water was one of the things he would never do”. Then Kitchener interviewed the General, but soon returned to his friends and said: “He won't do anything, or let us even touch the wells”. Colonel Wardrop, who had already tried to convince Buller, said: “I'll go and have another try”.

Colonel Verner relates:—

Kitchener and I waited in suspense. I need not repeat what he said. Presently Wardrop came towards us, and with a radiant smile on his face said: “Buller says we *may* fill in the principal well—the most important one”. Kitchener was on his feet in a moment. “Verner, you know the biggest well; get some men at once and fill it in.” Then, turning to Wardrop, he said: “Go along and fill in the biggest well you can find. I'll go and see about the rest.” We at once separated, each in quest of the “biggest well”. I don't know how many each of us filled in, or whether it was true that somebody put a camel into one, but I do know that, as soon as all our water-tanks and water-skin

were filled, the wells were filled in with camp *debris*, old camel saddles, branches, etc., and all stamped down with sand. We never heard if Buller knew what we did, or approved of it, nor did Kitchener and I care. Wardrop was a great favourite of Lord Wolseley's and his senior A.D.C., and could take care of himself.

The filling up of the wells made the retreat quite safe.

Kitchener, among others, was keenly disappointed with the policy of the British Government, which had delayed so long sending help to Gordon. "Khartoum", he said to a friend while he was yet on the desert march, "is our objective, and always will be." He had, however, to return to this country without seeing his hope of a British advance fulfilled. He was presented to the Queen at Osborne by the Duke of Connaught soon after his arrival, but the importance of his services was not fully realized at the War Office. In the month of June of 1885 the Mahdi died. The False Prophet did not, therefore, live long after Gordon. He was succeeded by his chief supporter, the Khalifa Abdullah-el-Taashi, who promised his followers to fulfil the Mahdi's plan of invading and conquering Egypt.

CHAPTER VIII

FROM MAJOR TO SIRDAR

Kitchener's experiences as a spy brought out not only his soldierly qualities, his love of adventure, and his fearless character, but also his ability as an actor.

As Abdullah Bey he must have acted his part well to deceive the cunning Dervishes who believed in the Mahdi. Although a man of strong personality, he was able to assume the manners and express the thoughts of men whose outlook upon life was so utterly different from that of a British officer.

It is not surprising, therefore, to find that Kitchener was interested in the stage. When he returned to London, and before he became a Lieutenant-Colonel, he actually assisted in the production of a military play. This interesting fact is recorded by Mr. Hermann Klein.

“During the preparation of one of Sir Augustus Harris’s dramas”, he writes, “I went to Drury Lane Theatre while a rehearsal was in progress, and sat down in the stalls to watch the training of an army of ‘supers’ in an imaginary fight with some African natives. In due course this was followed by a homecoming and a triumphal march through Trafalgar Square, with the hero at the head of his victorious company. The whole business was splendidly done. Actively assisting the manager in the operations was a gentleman in a frock-coat and tall hat, of undeniable military appearance, who impressed me both by his quiet, masterful manner, and the imperturbable patience with which he directed manœuvres to be repeated over and over again until they were satisfactorily executed. After the rehearsal was concluded I went upon the stage. Augustus Harris was talking to his military adviser. He beckoned me to approach.

“‘Klein, I want to introduce you to my friend, Major Kitchener, who has been kind enough to come

and help me with this soldiering work. What do you think of it? Did you ever see such fighting and marching on the stage before?"

About this time Kitchener finished his work on the Cyprus map, which was duly handed over to the authorities. He was afterwards sent out to Zanzibar as one of the Boundary Commissioners, and there he met the German Commissioners and assisted in the work of fixing the boundaries between parts of British East Africa and German East Africa.

It was owing to the intervention of Lord Salisbury that Kitchener was given this important commission. The War Office authorities, not realizing the importance of his great experiences in the East, had ordered him to take charge of barrack reconstruction work at Cork in his capacity as an officer of the Royal Engineers. Kitchener bore, with indignation which he did not conceal from his friends,

the spurns

That patient merit of the unworthy takes.

Says Colonel Verner in this connection:¹ "Kitchener's last words to me before he went out to Zanzibar were characteristic of him and his determination to overcome and live down all dull official opposition or attempts to curb him: 'Never mind, my dear fellow, a few years hence you and I will be generals, and those people who annoy us now will be looking at us out of their club windows with all their teeth falling out of their heads'".

In August of the following year, 1886, Kitchener

¹ *Nineteenth Century and After*, August, 1916.

returned to the Sudan, having been appointed Governor-General of the Red Sea Littoral and Commandant of Suakin. He held this position until September, 1888.

While he was at Suakin the Khalifa addressed his famous letter to Queen Victoria, in which he said:—

If thou wilt not yield to the command of God, and enter among the people of Islam and the followers of the Mahdi—grace be upon him—come thyself and thy armies and fight with the host of God. And if thou wilt not come, then be ready in thy place, for at His pleasure and at the same time that He shall will it, the hosts of God will raze thy dwelling and let thee taste of sorrow, because thou hast turned away from the path of the Lord, for therein is sufficiency and salvation is to him who followeth the Mahdi.

Those in this country who believed that it was possible to arrange terms with the Khalifa were silent after this astounding letter.

Kitchener was kept busy, during his term of office, strengthening the defences of strategic points and doing his utmost to prevent the tribes near Suakin joining forces with the Khalifa. Egyptian power in that region was at the time confined to a portion of the seaboard. The rest of the eastern Sudan, westward to the Nile and southward to the borders of Abyssinia, was terrorized by Osman Digna, a Turkish slave-dealer who had joined the Mahdi and became one of his most active military supporters before Gordon went out to Khartoum.

The possession of Suakin was then, as it is now, of great importance. There Moslem pilgrims, on their way to Mecca, embark for the Arabian port of Jeddah,

near which, it may be noted, is a mound called "Eve's grave".¹

The slave-traffic across the Red Sea was kept within bounds from Suakin, but could not be entirely suppressed so long as Osman Digna controlled so great an extent of territory.

A good deal of skirmishing took place between the Dervishes and the Egyptian force at Kitchener's disposal. At length, towards the close of 1887, Osman Digna began to bring up a powerful force to besiege Suakin and capture it for the Khalifa.

Kitchener was kept well informed regarding the Dervish leader's movements, for he had won the natives near Suakin to his side. When on one occasion he learned that the main force of the enemy had left their camp at Handub to conduct a raid, Kitchener went out to attack it with a little army of Sudanese. He scattered the garrison of Dervishes; Osman was nearly captured, and for a time was hotly pursued as he made his escape. It was in this action that Kitchener had a narrow escape from death. A bullet struck him in the jaw and lodged in his neck, and the retreat to Suakin had to be conducted by the next in command. He carried this bullet in his neck for three years. It was to conceal the scar left by the wound that he wore his moustache long and heavy.

As his wound was slow of healing, Kitchener had

¹ According to Moslem belief, when our first parents were cast down from Paradise, Adam fell on the Island of Ceylon and Eve at Jeddah, and they did not meet one another till two centuries afterwards. Both were reputed to be of gigantic stature. According to one Arab writer, Adam was "tall as a palm-tree".

to go to Cairo, but a few months later he returned to Suakin. Fresh complications set in, however, and he had to be invalided to London. Soon afterwards he was raised to the rank of Colonel, and appointed an aide-de-camp to the Queen.

In December he was back again at threatened Suakin. Sir Francis Grenfell, who had succeeded Sir Evelyn Wood as Sirdar, had arrived from Cairo with Egyptian troops. Kitchener was raised in the native army to the rank of Adjutant-General, and commanded a Sudanese brigade. An attack was made on Osman Digna's position at Gemaiza with sweeping success, and the Dervishes were forced to retreat after suffering heavy losses. Suakin was thus freed from the threat of investment.

One of the notable things about this brilliant little action was the proof it afforded of the value of the new Egyptian army, trained by British officers. The fellah soldiers conducted themselves with great gallantry and steadiness, and afforded proof that they were capable of fighting the Dervishes with hope of success. In recognition of his services in a later action at Toski, when he led the charge of the 20th Hussars and the Egyptian cavalry, Kitchener was made a Commander of the Bath.

After retiring from his post at Suakin, Kitchener went to Cairo. He did not take part in the subsequent operations near Suakin, which resulted in the occupation of the province of Tokar. The British Government was not anxious at the time to extend the area of operations. Lord Salisbury refused to be other than sceptical about what military men said regarding

the strategic importance of certain places on the shores of the Red Sea. "If they [the soldiers] were allowed full scope", he wrote to Lord Cromer, "they would insist on garrisoning the moon in order to protect us from Mars."

Kitchener was employed chiefly in organizing work at Cairo until 1892. In January of that year Tewfik Pasha died. The new Khedive, Abbas II, began his rule just when a new era was dawning in Egypt, but no one dreamed that he would ultimately be deposed for plotting with the Germans and Turks against Great Britain, the liberator of Egypt and the conqueror of the Sudan.

In April Sir Francis Grenfell resigned the post of Sirdar. It was thought that he would be succeeded by Colonel Wodehouse, the commandant of the frontier, who was doing excellent work in the neighbourhood of Wady Halfa. But, owing to Lord Cromer's influence, Kitchener was selected instead.

The new Sirdar set himself at once, with characteristic energy, to increase the efficiency of the new Egyptian army, which he, among others, was convinced would be required before very long to take a prominent part in the reconquest of the Sudan. He soon became known as a stern disciplinarian who showed no favour, and not only punished severely private soldiers found guilty of disobeying their officers, but also officers who misused their power, and were cruel and unjust to their men. He often discovered grievances by personal enquiry, and had them removed; and, in like manner, he also got to know a good deal about the common soldiers. One

day he had a chat with a private who was one of the few survivors of the army of Hicks Pasha.

"What made you run away?" he asked.

Said the soldier: "Why should we do otherwise? If we fight and win, we get neither thanks nor praise. We are treated like dogs. Our pay is kept from us. We are ill-treated continually and by everybody. Better we die and——"

"Yes?" queried Kitchener.

"Better we die and our officers with us," the man declared.

A different spirit prevailed among the rank and file when Kitchener continued the good work of his predecessors on stricter but yet more sympathetic lines. He made the army feel that he trusted it and believed in it, and that to him its honour was a personal matter. The army knew that it was under the command of a masterful leader.

Of course the Sirdar had his critics in Egypt as well as elsewhere. It came as a surprise, however, to find that the Khedive was one of them. In 1894 Abbas II travelled from Cairo to Wady Halfa on a tour of inspection. At the latter place a review of the garrison troops was held, and Abbas astonished the British officers by stating bluntly that he was not satisfied with the Egyptian army. This sneering criticism stung Kitchener to the quick. He promptly reported the matter to the British authorities, and offered to resign his post as Sirdar. The Home Government supported Kitchener, and the Khedive, having failed to get the Sirdar to withdraw his resignation until he himself withdrew his censure, had to issue a general order, which was printed in English, French, and Arabic, stating that he was satisfied with the efficiency

of the army and had the utmost confidence in its officers. The Queen made the Sirdar a Knight Commander of the Order of St. Michael and St. George, and he then became Sir Herbert Kitchener. The unpleasant incident was thus closed.

Kitchener and his Staff were looking forward to the time when the British Government would consent to the reconquest of the Sudan. Egypt's finances had been brought into a healthy state, and its new army was ready to take its share in the great forward movement. Without British assistance, however, the task could not be accomplished in the near future. The Home Government was slow to move. Many months were to elapse before Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Chancellor of the Exchequer, was to declare in the House of Commons that "Egypt could never be held to be permanently secure so long as a hostile Power was in occupation of the Nile valley up to Khartoum".

In March, 1896, a partial reconquest was decided upon. The British Government had been convinced that the province of Dongola should be occupied, and this decision, after so long a period of waiting, was received with enthusiasm by the British soldiers in Egypt.

Mr. Frank Scudamore, the war correspondent, has told how the news first reached the Sirdar. "Kitchener's A.D.C., Major Watson, was", he writes, "playing billiards at the Turf Club when a telegram was brought to him. He read it and darted round to the Sirdar's house. All was in darkness, for the Sirdar had gone to bed. By dint of throwing gravel at the bedroom window, Watson awakened his chief,

who came down in no very good humour at being called up. But when he read the telegram Kitchener at once lost his iron control and joining hands with his A.D.C., broke into a wild dance round the house. The dispatch authorized Kitchener to move on Akasha, and his chance had come at last."

At the time the Nile railway extended to Sarras, beyond Wady Halfa, and Akasha was fifty miles farther south. It was hoped that a Dervish force, which was posted in the vicinity of Akasha would be rounded up and prevented from retreating to the town of Dongola. A swift, unexpected blow might be followed by the restoration of the whole province and the further extension of the railway.

Lord Cromer had the utmost confidence in the military genius of the Sirdar, whose army was in perfect readiness. "Sir Herbert Kitchener", he has written, "also possessed another quality which is rare among soldiers. . . . He did not think that extravagance was the necessary handmaiden of efficiency. On the contrary, he was a rigid economist, and, whilst making adequate provision for all essential and necessary expenditure, suppressed with a firm hand any tendency towards waste and extravagance."

Kitchener arranged his plan of campaign and prepared to strike the first stunning blow at the Dervish power. A British battalion was attached to the Egyptian army, which was further reinforced by withdrawing the garrison of native soldiers from Suakin, where they were replaced by Indian troops. He had then under his command a force of over 10,000.

As the Sirdar moved south from Sarras he had the

railway constructed to within a mile or two of Akasha. Having ascertained meanwhile that the Dervish force, about 3500 strong, was at Firket, about sixteen miles south of Akasha, he resolved to strike at it. He planned a bold night attack. Two columns, each about 5000 strong, were sent out across the desert by different routes, with instructions to meet at Firket and surround it. This was a difficult operation, but Kitchener had arranged everything so well, to the smallest detail, that it was completely successful. The Dervishes were caught unawares, and after a brief fight on the morning of 7th June they were defeated and scattered in flight with heavy losses.

Three months later Dongola was occupied. The only fighting of any consequence was carried out by river-boats at Hafir. Kitchener had, however, to struggle with the elements and with disease. Cholera broke out in the camp shortly after Firket was occupied, while the movements of troops and the work of extending the railway were hampered by storms.

Two disasters which occurred in that difficult country may be noted as examples. A column about 1400 strong was dispatched across the desert to Kermep, a distance of forty-five miles. It was caught in a terrible sand-storm, which was accompanied by thunder and lightning, and thrown into confusion. Many lives were lost, and the first party of survivors to reach the camp numbered less than seventy. A tremendous storm of rain also caused heavy flooding along the line of the new railway. Several miles of embankment were swept away, and in some places the water was twelve feet deep. It seemed as if nature

itself had declared war on the railway constructor. Blank despair was pictured on all faces in the flooded valley until the Sirdar arrived and stirred everyone to great activity. "He rose, as he has always done, to the situation", a military writer has recorded. "Many a man would have wilted before such a complicated series of evils. But 'K.', taking with him 'Jimmy' Watson and Lord Edward Cecil, boarded a pilot engine and steamed for the scene of the disaster, where on his arrival he at once started to reconstruct the wrecked line, carrying it round an altogether different section of rocky desert.

"To accomplish this his men were forced to dive into twelve feet of water and tear up rails and sleepers and carry them to the bank, while the indefatigable 'K.', in his shirt sleeves, aided and encouraged them. As a result, fourteen miles of line were laid over the newly-surveyed ground in twenty-four hours, and the interrupted supply of food and war material was at once continued." In the end all difficulties were overcome by dogged perseverance. Kitchener was able once again to visit Debba, where he had sojourned when keeping in touch with Gordon at Khartoum, and to occupy Korti, whence the column under Stewart marched southward across the desert to Metemma. The whole of the province of Dongola "was", in Lord Cromer's words, "reclaimed from barbarism", and the town of Merowe, beside the Fourth Cataract, was occupied by an Egyptian outpost. It was between that point and Abu Hamed, at the corner of the great river loop, that Colonel Stewart's steamer from Khartoum was wrecked.



LORD KITCHENER AS SIRDAR OF THE EGYPTIAN ARMY

(1890-1899)

The next great move was to advance upon Khartoum and avenge Gordon by breaking up the Mahdist power and introducing the blessings of civilization into the territory remaining under the barbarous sway of the Khalifa.

CHAPTER IX

KITCHENER THE CONQUEROR

In 1892, when Kitchener was appointed Sirdar of the Egyptian army, Sir Samuel Baker wrote to him:—

I feel sure that the task of regaining the Sudan will fall to yourself, and by its success will sustain the good fortune which I trust will ever favour you through simple merit alone. . . . My opinion is very strong upon the necessity of quietly preparing for the event beforehand, so that when the moment shall arrive, the success may be accomplished without loss of time. In all our recent expeditions one notes a general absence of military science. You will have it with undoubted result, which will bring honour upon the force you command and to yourself.

Sir Samuel's words were prophetic. After the conclusion of the Dongola campaign, in September, 1896, Kitchener paid a visit to London, where he discussed the Sudan question with the Government and the officials at the War Office. He convinced the British authorities that the time had come to strike a final and crushing blow against Mahdism. In December he returned to Egypt with instructions to advance upon Khartoum.

Mr. Frank Scudamore, the war correspondent, says that "when the reconquest of the Sudan was finally

decided upon, the Government thought of giving the supreme command of the expedition to Sir Redvers Buller, and asked him to estimate the cost. Sir Redvers replied that he thought it could be done for £3,500,000. Then the Government asked the Sirdar to tender, and he said he would do the whole thing—lock, stock, and barrel—for £500,000. And he did."

Mr. Scudamore tells another story about Kitchener, which shows how kindly he was at heart. A British non-commissioned officer, who had served under him as an instructor in the Egyptian army, had been invalided home. The Sirdar saw him and said: "Well, Sergeant, I hope you will come back fit and well—and—er—here is something that may be useful to you at home." He then handed the grateful soldier a cheque for £25.

The Sirdar appreciated merit, and was as ready to commend as to find fault. Steevens, the war correspondent, tells us that in the midst of his work at a supply-station in the Sudan he was "now breaking a man's heart with curt censure, now exalting him to heaven with curt praise". Once while examining a length of new railway he addressed an officer, saying: "How's this? Work suspended! You must go on: that line has to be finished as soon as mortal man can finish it."

"Sorry, sir, I can't," answered the young officer; "the Government hasn't sent on the sleepers."

"I have no use for a man who says 'can't'," came the abrupt reply. "You had better go back to Cairo."

Another characteristic story is told regarding the

making of a road from Cairo to Heluan. Kitchener asked the engineer if it could be completed by 1st May.

"The work can scarcely be finished by that time," was the answer.

"But is it possible?" urged Kitchener.

"It's possible, but——"

"Very well, then," Kitchener said, "I shall drive my car from Cairo to Heluan over that road on 1st May."

And he did.

The pushful commander was also as cunning as any Arab. Once he ordered a telephone wire to be laid across a portion of desert land. As the workers had foretold, the Dervishes cut the wire frequently, but each time these occurrences were reported to Kitchener he just ordered the wires to be repaired. It was some time before it became generally known that the real wire ran underground, and that the one which the Dervishes were so busy cutting was only a "dummy" one.

When the Sirdar began his great advance southward towards Khartoum he had two armies under his command—an army of fighting-men and an army of navvies. He was not only a great general but a great railway-constructor. And not only did he make the Sudan military railway, but he managed it as well. Indeed, he was General Manager of the Sudan.

"South of Assuan", a correspondent of an Indian paper wrote at the time, "there is no civilian government: steamboats and sailing-craft, railway and tele-

graph, are under the sole control of the Sirdar. The steamboats are under the orders of his subordinate officers; the railway is worked and repaired by his 'railway battalion'; the telegraph and post offices are manned by privates of the Royal Engineers." No civilian trader could enter the military area without his permission.

"The Sirdar", continued the same writer, "has his own postage stamps and his own telegraph stamps. . . . Every department of the Sudan State comes completely under the Sirdar's control; his will is law."

The Khalifa believed that Kitchener would advance southward, like Wolseley, by following the great Nile loop from Debba to Abu Hamed, beyond which lay Berber, and perhaps also by sending a column across the desert to Metemma. The Khalifa knew well that his chief allies in the Sudan were hunger and thirst. An invading army could not carry sufficient supplies, if it were large, and if it were small the Dervishes were confident that they would overwhelm it.

The Khalifa, however, reckoned without Kitchener, the railway constructor, who hit on the daring plan of laying a new railway across the desert from Wady Halfa, above the Second Cataract, to Abu Hamed, a distance of 234 miles—that is, about as far as from London to Darlington by railway. He placed the work in the hands of a clever Canadian officer of the Royal Engineers, Lieutenant Girouard, and ordered the work to be done within a year. Two thousand native navvies had to be employed and fed on that waterless desert, which Mr. Winston Churchill has described as follows:—

Level plains of smooth sand—a little rosier than buff, a little paler than salmon—are interrupted only by occasional peaks of rock, black, stark, and shapeless. Rainless storms dance tirelessly over the hot, crisp surface of the ground. The fine sand, driven by the wind, gathers into deep drifts, and silts among the dark rocks of the hills. The earth burns with the quenchless thirst of ages.

When the work began the Dervishes were in occupation of Abu Hamed. It was indeed a daring scheme. Water had to be brought up daily as the line crept into the desert. Then Kitchener ordered the engineer to bore for water, much to the amusement of the friendly Arabs. Two attempts were made without result, but the third attempt was successful. Other wells were afterwards discovered also. In July, 1897, about 130 miles of the railway were completed. Was it safe to go on with the remaining 100 odd miles so long as Abu Hamed was in the hands of the enemy? Kitchener settled that point by sending General Hunter with a mobile column along the Nile from Merowe, below the Fourth Cataract, to capture Abu Hamed. This town was occupied on 7th August after a sharp attack, the whole Dervish garrison force being either killed or taken prisoners. The railway afterwards linked the captured town with Wady Halfa. Then it was continued south to Atbara. The distance from Wady Halfa to Atbara is about the same as from London to Edinburgh by the east-coast route. Berber had been evacuated by the Dervishes when the railway was creeping towards Abu Hamed, and the Sirdar's advance column occupied it on 31st August. When the

railway was extended to that town the journey from Wady Halfa "took a day", as Steevens has said, "instead of weeks". Soldiers could now be brought down speedily when required, and stores could be carried not only by train but by steamer as well. The conquest of the Sudan had begun in earnest, and the first triumph was the victory over the Khalifa's allies, hunger and thirst.

On the Nile there was a little fleet of river war-steamers which penetrated as far as Metemma, near which Sir Herbert Stewart had been mortally wounded. Not only did they scatter, with their fire, forces of Dervishes, but also brought back to Kitchener valuable information about the enemy.

On 8th April, 1898, Kitchener fought and won the battle of Atbara, and put an entire Dervish army out of action.

He had previously moved his head-quarters to Fort Atbara (Dakheila), where the Atbara River flows into the Nile. At the time there was not much flow, however. The Atbara was little better than a series of pools, and the great Nile ran at its lowest, its waters pouring over rocks that are submerged for the greater part of the year. Kitchener concentrated a force of three brigades, one of which was British made up of battalions of the Royal Warwickshire and Lincolnshire Regiments and Seaforth and Cameron Highlanders, with a regiment of Egyptian cavalry, a Camel Corps, twenty-four field- and horse-artillery guns, a dozen Maxims, and a rocket detachment.

A Dervish army under Mahmud, a young Dervish emir, who was accompanied by Osman Digna, had

concentrated at Metemma. It was expected to move north along the Nile to attack the British, but, instead, it crossed the river and moved in a single march forty miles westward across the desert to Nakheila, on the Atbara River. There it was entrenched in a circular camp protected by a stockade and a zareba, about thirty-five miles distant from Kitchener's headquarters.

Kitchener began to advance against the enemy on March 20th. He expected that Mahmud would advance to meet him, but was surprised to find he remained in his zareba. About a fortnight elapsed before it was decided to push southward against this strong Dervish position. General Hunter went out with a mobile force on two occasions to examine the zareba and found it was strong, and that the Dervishes were numerous in the trenches. On the first occasion he doubted the wisdom of attacking, but on the second occasion, having got within a few hundred yards of the Dervish lines, he favoured a general attack, which was accordingly arranged.

Having reached Umbadia, about seven miles distant from Mahmud's zareba, Kitchener ordered a night advance on 7th April, so that the fighting might be got over before noon. The force went forward slowly and cautiously in the darkness. Soon after midnight the moon rose and the bayonets flashed in its rays. Marching was then easier, but the strictest silence was enforced. A haze hovered over the desert, and the advancing force got within 1000 yards of the enemy unobserved before four o'clock in the morning. When dawn broke, the Kitchener army, which lay round

a desert ridge like great callipers, was ready to attack. The Dervishes woke up and began to cook their morning meal, when the Sirdar ordered his artillery to open fire. The first gun bellowed across the desert before half-past six. A storm of shell pounded the Dervish trenches for an hour and twenty minutes, and only a few random shots came back in reply. The enemy lay low all the time within their lines, and a force of its cavalry outside the zareba which threatened attack was beaten back by Maxim-fire. Then, in time, Kitchener ordered the general advance on the Dervish camp. The clear bugles sounded the charge, and the bands struck up their heartening strains — Englishmen marched to the familiar music of fifes and drums, the Highlanders to the thrilling tones of the bagpipes, and the Sudanese to the brass instruments of their dusky bandsmen.

Not until the Sirdar's heroes were within 300 yards of the zareba did the Dervish rifles splutter fire. Bullets then sent up spurts of sand, and soldiers fell, but the advance went on as steadily as a dress parade. White and dark soldiers vied one with another to reach the zareba first. This thorny obstacle looked formidable, but the attackers, having swept it with steady and accurate fire, pulled it to pieces and ran at the swarming Dervishes behind the stockade. Nothing could resist the gleaming bayonets. The stockade defence was overcome, and then three lines of trenches were captured despite the valour and determination of the dark-skinned defenders. Englishmen, Scotsmen, Sudanese, and Egyptians swept forward like an avalanche, clearing every shelter and hole,

killing many fierce Dervishes, and putting the remainder to flight. The whole zareba was captured, and hundreds of Dervishes who attempted to escape across the dry bed of the Atbara through clouds of sand were laid low by rifle-fire. Before half-past eight the battle was over and the bugles sounded "Cease fire". The Dervish army of over 16,000 had ceased to exist. Osman Digna and a force of cavalry effected escape towards Omdurman; scattered bands fled up the Atbara and were rounded up by our cavalry. Those who escaped eastward either perished in the waterless wastes of desert or were accounted for by tribes friendly to the British in the eastern Sudan. In Kitchener's army less than 560 officers and men were killed or wounded.

Among the prisoners taken were Mahmud, the Dervish general. He was brought bare-headed before Kitchener—"a tall, dark-brown-complexioned man of something between thirty and forty", says Steevens, who relates what took place at the interview.¹ Mahmud, a dignified cruel-faced man, "looked neither to right nor to left, but strode up to the Sirdar with his head erect.

" 'Are you the man Mahmud?' asked the Sirdar.

" 'Yes, I am Mahmud, and I am the same as you.' He meant Commander-in-Chief.

" 'Why did you come to make war here?'

" 'I came because I was told—the same as you.'

" Mahmud was removed to custody; but everybody liked him the better for looking at his fate so straight and defiantly."

¹ *With Kitchener to Khartoum*, Chapter VIII.

After this decisive victory the Sirdar's army marched back to the Nile. Berber was entered by Kitchener in a triumphant procession arranged with purpose to impress the natives, as Kitchener, understanding them so well, knew how they could be impressed. Bunting decked the town, and a triumphal arch spanned the gate. An Egyptian guard of honour received the conqueror, who rode into the town accompanied by his chief officers and followed by victorious troops. The people cheered, shouting: "Lu! lu! lu! lu-lu!"

Alone between two forces, marching apart, walked the haughty Mahmud, his wrists bound behind his back. Here was the dreaded Dervish general! The natives shouted: "Dog! dog!" as he went past, and the bands filled the air with the music of victory.

An interval of waiting and preparation followed. The next move was a strong advance towards Khar-toum, and Kitchener arranged his plans to the minutest detail. During the hot season Lord Cromer left Egypt to go on holiday in the Scottish Highlands. "Early in August", he tells, "the Sirdar, whose calculations of time were never once at fault, warned me that I ought to be back in Cairo by September 1st." Omdurman fell on September 2nd, 1898.

It became known to Kitchener in August that the Khalifa's army at Omdurman was between 40,000 and 50,000 strong. He accordingly had his own force increased until he had under his command 8200 British and 17,600 Egyptian soldiers, with artillery on land and water. A fleet of nine river gunboats was under the command of Commander Keppel, and there were also five transport steamers. Great sup-

plies of food and munitions, borne by land and water, were accumulated to the south of Shabluka, below the Sixth Cataract, after the river banks had been cleared from Fort Atbara to Metemma and Gubat, where Sir Herbert Stewart's relief column had halted, and subsequently to Shabluka and beyond. The problem of feeding the troops was thus solved.

Onward moved the conqueror's army, now contending with dust storms, now soaked with unexpected rain showers. The desert was hot by day, and the long marches tried the men to the utmost. No opposition was met with up till the end of August, much to the surprise of the officers, who expected the Khalifa to harass the progress of the army. Small forces of Dervishes fell back as our "screens" of cavalry advanced. Prisoners and deserters were cross-examined by the Intelligence Department, which kept the Sirdar fully informed. At length Kerreri was occupied without opposition, and from a hill-top behind it the first glimpse was caught of walled Omdurman with the dome of the Mahdi's tomb gleaming in sunshine. In front of it was a great army of white-robed Dervishes. On the opposite bank of the Nile lay the brown ruins of Khartoum.

The hour was at hand when the fate of Mahdism was to be decided once and for ever. Evidently the Khalifa trusted in the strength of his army, and believed he would shatter the advancing forces. Under his command were warriors who had taken part in the wholesale slaughter of Hicks Pasha's army, who had entered Khartoum when Gordon was slain, who had seen the British square broken at Abu

Klea, and had harried the Khedive's lost domains as far north as Wady Halfa, and as far eastward as the outskirts of Suakin. Never before had such a vast army gathered round the sacred black banner of the cult of the False Prophet.

The opposing armies drew closer together, until, late in the evening, they were only about four miles distant. Did the Dervishes intend to deliver a night attack? If this was the Khalifa's plan, it seemed certain that the coming conflict would be a fierce and terrible one.

A welcome diversion was, however, caused on 1st September by the British river fleet. Before noon the gunboats were engaging the enemy's batteries, and afterwards they attacked the forts at Omdurman, dismounting many guns and battering the mud walls. The Mahdi's tomb received close attention from a howitzer battery which was landed when Major Wortley, who commanded a force of Arab irregulars, attacked and captured a fortified village on the east bank of the river. Several shells struck the tomb, and its dome was wrecked. When evening came on the gunboats steamed down the river again. They were to take part in the coming battle.

If the Khalifa thought that Kitchener would, like his predecessors in the Sudan, arrange his army in a square, he must have been surprised to find that he adopted another formation. Probably he was pleased that he did so, for to a general who had no knowledge of the devastating power of modern artillery and rifles Kitchener's plan seemed to be a weak one.

The British and Egyptian forces were arranged in crescent formation round the village of Agaiga, on the Nile bank, about seven miles from Omdurman. Gunboats protected the flanks. A narrow plain stretched in front between the ridge of Gebel Surgham on the left and the Kerreri heights on the right. The Egyptian cavalry and the Camel Corps were on the Kerreri elevation, and Gebel Surgham was not held, but Kitchener had it covered by his artillery. From the outskirts of Omdurman the Khalifa's great army advanced until it formed a long line, stretching south-westwards from behind Gebel Surgham. Apparently his plan was to strike the invading force like a whip, and at one blow to cut off its retreat from the north and drive it into the river. Kitchener's semicircular formation was thin, and appeared to be weak, but the great general had intentionally thinned his line so that he might sweep with its devastating fire as wide an area as possible. This was to be no hand-to-hand fight, but one of shells and bullets against masses of spearmen and horsemen.

Had the Khalifa chosen to attack by night he might have prolonged the campaign. The Kitchener army slept beside their arms, while the sentries gazed anxiously across the sandy plain, and hills and ridges were watched by outposts. Meanwhile search-lights gleamed from the river gunboats, startling the Der-vishes in their camp.

"The Khalifa slept in the rear of the centre of his host surrounded by his generals," Mr. Winston Churchill has related.¹ "Suddenly the whole scene

¹ *The River War*, Chapter XIV.

was lit up by a pale glare. Abdullah and the chiefs sprang up. Everything around them was bathed in an awful white illumination. Far away by the river there gleamed a brilliant circle of light—the cold, pitiless eye of a demon. The Khalifa put his hand on Osman Azrak's shoulder—Osman, who was to lead the frontal attack at dawn—and whispered: 'What is this strange thing?' 'Sire,' replied Osman, 'they are looking at us!' Thereat a great fear filled all their minds. The Khalifa had a small tent, which showed conspicuously in the search-light. He had it hurriedly pulled down. Some of the emirs covered their faces, lest the baleful rays should blind them. All feared that some terrible projectile would follow the path of light. And then suddenly it passed on—for the sapper who worked the lens could see nothing at that distance but the brown plain—and swept along the ranks of the sleeping army, rousing up the startled warriors as a wind sweeps over a field of standing corn."

The night passed in silence. At 4.30 in the morning the Kitchener army was roused by shrill bugle-notes, and soon every man was ready for the fray. The gunboats and cavalry moved towards the Dervish lines as if to rouse the dusky warriors.

Shortly before six o'clock it was reported to the Sirdar that the Khalifa's army was advancing on a five-mile front. The shouts of the warriors sounded in the distance like surf breaking on a rocky coast. On they came with banners streaming in the morning air. In the centre was the sacred black flag of the Khalifa, on the Dervish right fluttered many white

flags and a single red banner, and on the left there were larger flags of green.

First came the frontal attack. The Khalifa's weak artillery opened fire at 3000 yards, and then the British artillery burst forth, casting showers of shrapnel into the massed ranks of the Dervishes. Hundreds fell, but still they came on, until within the range of rifle- and Maxim-fire. Then the shouting warriors were mowed down as ripe corn is by a reaper.

The white-flagged force meanwhile came surging over the ridge of Gebel Surgham. It was allowed to advance until a whole division was exposed. Then the artillery on Kitchener's left and the river gunboats opened a devastating fire which wrought terrible havoc. The remnant of the enemy that rushed forward was exterminated by rifles and Maxims.

Again the frontal attack was developing. Fresh masses of Dervishes were arranged in line, and came on until caught in the network of bullets and bursting shells. Then the warriors fell, not singly, but in companies. The white lines of Dervishes came on like long sea-rollers towards the shore, to be broken and utterly spent. Many died 800 yards distant from the rifles, others came as near as 300 yards; one old man carrying a flag, who seemed to bear the charmed life, rushed on alone and fell at a distance of only 150 yards.

Despite the fanatical bravery of the Dervish warriors, the great massed attacks failed, and by eight o'clock it was evident that a crushing defeat was being inflicted. The Khalifa had little tactical skill,

and he had underestimated the power of the Kitchener army.

When the dusky warriors began to conceal themselves in hollows and behind low ridges to escape the deadly rifle-fire, the British artillery searched for and found them, and as they leapt up to run they were caught by the rattling Maxims and killed in hundreds.

To ensure a complete victory Kitchener decided to prevent the survivors from re-entering Omdurman. If the town were held by a strong Dervish force, another battle would have to be fought, which would possibly result in heavy casualties. The British cavalry moved out round the ridge of Gebel Surgham to attack a reserve force of the Khalifa's, numbering, as it seemed, about 300. But as the 21st Lancers rode forward, a mass of over 3000 Dervishes sprang out of a dry water-course, in which they had been concealed, brandishing swords and spears. The four hundred Lancers never paused, but struck at this mighty force and actually rode through it, suffering heavy losses. It was all over in a couple of minutes. The Lancers rode on for about 200 yards farther and then re-formed. As the Dervishes were massed to receive a second charge, the Lancers dismounted and opened fire with their magazine carbines, scattering the army and compelling a retreat in the direction opposite to Omdurman.

Previous to this the Dervishes had attempted to overwhelm the Camel Corps on the Kerreri heights, but were driven back chiefly by the gunboats, and the corps escaped isolation and annihilation.

Shortly after nine o'clock Kitchener's semicircular



LORD KITCHENER AND STAFF ENTERING OMDURMAN

In the background is the Mahdi's tomb

force, having opened out, was moving forward. The formation then resembled the letter L, the longer side sweeping across the plain and the shorter crossing the Gebel Surgham height. The 1st and 3rd Egyptian Brigades, under Colonel Macdonald and Colonel Lewis, were assailed by a strong Dervish force, but it was beaten off after brisk fighting, while the Gebel Surgham ridge was cleared by Colonel Maxwell's 2nd Egyptian Brigade. The way to Omdurman was now well open for Kitchener's advance, the remnants of the Khalifa's army having been swept into the desert. But these remnants were stronger than was suspected at the time. A strong army had besides been massing behind the Kerreri heights, and Kitchener's right wing had grown weak in consequence of the movement towards Omdurman of the main force, a part of which was behind Gebel Surgham.

A fresh attack broke out on the front against Lewis and Macdonald, and next came the fierce, unlooked-for attacks of two forces of Dervishes from the Kerreri heights. It was then Colonel Hector Macdonald, of whose qualities Kitchener had full knowledge, achieved fame as a resourceful and determined leader. His brigade was attacked in front and on right and left. But "he saw everything," Steevens has written; "knew what to do; knew how to do it; did it". He arranged his men to receive the attacks so as to concentrate his fire in the right direction at the right moment. While Dervish hordes rushed towards his gallant little force he changed formation as coolly as if he were drilling "on parade". With a line bent

at either end to a shape roughly resembling three sides of a square, he scattered the enemy just as the supports sent to him by Kitchener were arriving. The Egyptian cavalry swept the ground and accounted for what remained of the last reserves of the Khalifa. Had Macdonald been defeated, Kitchener could not have advanced on Omdurman speedily enough to prevent the enemy re-entering it. But Kitchener trusted in Macdonald, and his confidence in him was justified.

The whole British-Egyptian army moved westward after the Kerreri attack was broken, and the fleeing remnants of the Khalifa's proud force were driven into the sandy wastes. At half-past eleven the battle was over. Mahdism was broken for ever. Kitchener had conquered the Sudan.

Of the great Dervish army 11,000 had been killed, 16,000 wounded, and about 4000 taken prisoners. The remaining 14,000 fled. A portion moved southward beyond Omdurman, but many survivors returned home, and, having resumed their ordinary attire, took part, as peaceful-looking citizens of the Dervish capital, in welcoming the conqueror with shouts of "Lu! lu! lu!" There were less than 400 casualties in the British-Egyptian army.

The battle was fought on a Friday, and that night the streets of Omdurman were crowded with slumbering British and Egyptian troops. On Sunday morning Kitchener and his Staff, accompanied by four chaplains—a Roman Catholic, an Anglican, a Church of Scotland, and a Methodist—and detachments of troops, visited Khartoum to hold Gordon's

burial service and hoist the flags of Britain and Egypt. In the future, as Lord Cromer afterwards made clear in a speech at Omdurman, the Sudan was to "be governed jointly by the Queen of Britain and by the Khedive of Egypt", Britain being "the pre-dominant partner".

The troops were halted in front of the ruins of Gordon's palace, where he had waited for the coming of his countrymen fourteen years previously. Two flagstaves had been erected on the roof. At the signal from the Sirdar a British officer hoisted the Union Jack. Guns were fired by the river war-craft, the Guards band played the British National Anthem, and Kitchener and his officers saluted. Then an Egyptian officer hoisted the Egyptian flag, while the Sudanese band rendered the Khedivial hymn, and it was saluted also. Kitchener called for cheers for Queen Victoria and cheers for the Khedive of Egypt—cheers that Gordon had hoped to hear—and they rose in the still morning air while the bands resounded triumphantly and the guns bellowed from the blue river.

In the hush that followed there rose the solemn strains of the "Dead March in *Saul*". It was Gordon's funeral service. The beautiful words of the fifteenth psalm were repeated:—

Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. . . . In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord. . . .

The soldiers of Britain remembered the upright Gordon and bowed their heads. After prayers had been

said, the Sudanese band played Gordon's favourite hymn: "Abide with Me".

Kitchener was deeply moved. It was his hour of triumph, and he thought of Gordon. Tears dimmed his eyes when officer after officer walked forward, following General Hunter, and shook his hand in silence. No boastful conqueror this, but a brave, modest soldier who had done his duty for the love and honour of his Queen and country!

A few days later Kitchener learned that a small force of dark troops, with European officers, had for two months been in occupation of Fashoda, which is situated over 300 miles southward of Khartoum, on the western bank of the White Nile. This force, as it afterwards transpired, consisted of 120 Senegalese natives, with eight French officers and non-commissioned officers. Major Marchand was in command. He had led his expedition from the western seaboard to Fashoda, where he hoisted the French flag and thus claimed a large portion of the southern Sudan.

Kitchener went south with a fleet of five river steamers. He welcomed Major Marchand and complimented him on his wonderful feat. The situation was a delicate one, but Kitchener proved to be an able diplomatist; he was tactful as he was firm. Politely ignoring the French flag, he had the Egyptian flag hoisted not far from it, but refrained from hoisting the Union Jack. This was a wise proceeding. Kitchener claimed the territory on behalf of the Egyptian Government in the first place. He was the Sirdar of the Egyptian army, and in that capacity had a right to insist on Egypt's possession of every

part of the Sudan. The British and French Governments could settle by negotiations any dispute they might have regarding their relations with the Egyptian Government. If he had attacked Marchand's force war would almost certainly have broken out between France and Britain. Having left a garrison at Fashoda, the Sirdar then went sixty miles farther south to Sobat, and there landed another garrison and hoisted the Egyptian flag.

For several months the British and French Governments discussed the problem which had resulted from the French occupation of Fashoda. Ultimately a friendly agreement was signed regarding the future administration of the Sudan and the British and French spheres of influence in Central Africa. Major Marchand evacuated Fashoda on 11th December, and went eastward through Abyssinia to the coast.

Kitchener had returned to London in October, where he received the freedom of the City and a sword of honour. The public welcomed him with enthusiasm. Queen Victoria conferred upon him the Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath, and he was elevated to the peerage as Lord Kitchener of Khartoum and of Aspsall.

In his tribute to the Sirdar, Lord Salisbury, as Prime Minister, praised him for his valour and patriotism, and said regarding the Sudan campaign:

He took exactly the time necessary for his work; he made precisely the preparations which that work required; he expended upon it the time, the resource, and the military strength precisely which it demanded, and his victory came out with absolute accuracy, like the answer to a scientific calculation.

Kitchener, in his hour of intense popularity, made a characteristic request when he appealed to his countrymen for funds to erect and endow a Gordon Memorial College at Khartoum. He named the sum of £100,000, and £120,000 were subscribed within a few weeks. He returned to Cairo in December as Governor-General of the Sudan.

The new Governor-General had only one disturbed province, that of Kordofan, in which the Khalifa still moved about with a considerable army. An expedition was fitted out to operate against him, but he was not rounded up until 24th November, 1899, when his force of 3000 was surprised by a night attack and he and his principal emirs were slain. The survivors of the last Mahdist army surrendered. Sir Reginald Wingate commanded the Egyptian troops which brought to an end this small but arduous campaign. The Sudan was afterwards declared open to trade.

Lord Kitchener did not long remain Governor-General of the Sudan. The Boer War had broken out on 9th October, 1899, and on 21st December he left Egypt, having resigned the Sirdarship, in which he was succeeded by Sir Reginald Wingate. Disasters had occurred in South Africa, and Lord Kitchener, on being appealed to, consented to accompany Lord Roberts, the new Commander-in-Chief of the British South African Expeditionary Force, as Chief of the Staff.

A story is told in this connection. A friend is said to have sympathized with Kitchener because he was placed second in command. Indignant at the idea that he was disappointed because he had not been

appointed Commander-in-Chief, Kitchener declared abruptly: "I would gladly black Roberts's boots for him".

CHAPTER X

SOUTH AFRICAN CAMPAIGN

During what was called at the time "the black week", in December, 1899, there had occurred three reverses to British troops in South Africa. At Stormberg the Boer force which had invaded Cape Colony inflicted a defeat on General Gatacre's column and captured 600 prisoners and two guns; at Magersfontein Lord Methuen planned a night attack, which failed, and the Highland Brigade suffered heavily; while at Colenso, in Natal, the entrenched Boers repulsed Buller's attempt to cross the Tugela River with severe losses in men and guns. Ladysmith, Kimberley, and Mafeking were hemmed in by the Boers, who proved themselves to be more capable as fighting-men than had been anticipated. They could move swiftly and strike hard, being well armed, and they had excellent leaders. It became evident that strong British reinforcements would have to be sent out to bring the war to a successful conclusion.

In her *Sidelights of the War* Miss Jessica Sykes, who was in South Africa during the "black week", wrote as follows: "Lords Roberts and Kitchener's arrival seems to have put new heart into everyone at Cape Town (not on the Dutch side), and I think I may

truly say a thorough change of military policy was expected. Every loyalist appreciated the fact that from the terrible muddling and bungling—not to use unkind words—which had unhappily been pursued before the arrival of these generals, there had been an amount of bad feeling created which it would take all Lord Roberts's tact to overcome."

The same writer tells that she saw a "tremendous accumulation of stores of every description" lying in the great military warehouses at Durban. "Knowing how badly they were required at the seat of war, I suppose the old proverb, 'Too many cooks spoil the broth', is a good explanation of much of the mismanagement and constant muddle which has attended our transport service in South Africa." Kitchener soon began to set things to right after he arrived. A prominent civilian with whom he had luncheon at Cape Town said to him: "Well, how do you propose to reorganize the transport?"

"Reorganize it!" Kitchener answered dryly. "I intend to organize it."

Kitchener demanded efficiency. He expected every man to do his duty, and if a soldier was found at fault it did not matter to him what position he held. He just said what he thought.

A certain yeomanry officer, while on parade, rated his men in unmeasured terms. Nothing was right, in his judgment, that the troopers did. They sat their horses wrong, they moved unlike machinery, &c., and were "no better than a rabble", "a lot of gutter-snipes", &c.

"That", said Lord Kitchener, coming up, "is not a way to address men. They are not a rabble, but soldiers, and to be spoken to as such. No troops can be trained in that fashion, and

the commander who does not respect his men is unable to lead them.”¹

The whole force heard what Kitchener said. The men were elated, and the yeomanry officer received a lesson he was not likely to forget.

During the early weeks of 1900 Kitchener brought about sweeping changes in the transport system in South Africa. He was organizing victory as he had done in the Sudan. The plan which Lord Roberts and he arranged was to move northwards right into the centre of the Orange Free State a strong army which would disorganize the Boer plan of campaign and draw off the forces which were isolating Ladysmith in the east and Kimberley in the west. The first blow was struck against Cronje, who had repulsed Methuen's army at Magersfontein.

On 6th February Roberts and Kitchener left Cape Town by train for Modder River camp. A few days later Kitchener, having explained the plan of campaign to the leading officers, ordered French to advance with a mounted force to relieve Kimberley, and that great cavalry leader was given an opportunity of waging warfare in quite a new way. With the aid of his horse artillery he attacked strongly entrenched positions, held by mounted infantry, extending his force like a “screen”, and passed between and around the Boer forces, which were taken by surprise and thrown into confusion. French's rapid movements broke down all organized resistance on the western area of operations, and after the capture of Klip's Drift, an important strategic point, a dash was made

¹ Bennet Burleigh.

towards Kimberley. Two kopjes near the town were occupied by Boers, but French extended his squadrons and swept round and past them, threatening to cut off the retreat of the enemy, who had to limber up and abandon the kopjes. On the evening of the 15th February Kimberley was relieved.

Meanwhile Cronje's force was being attended to. Finding himself hard pressed and his retreat threatened, the wily old Boer general abandoned his Magersfontein lines so as to keep in touch with Bloemfontein, from which town his supplies were obtained. His movements had to be hastened, for the British forces were gathering round him. Learning that he was on the move, Kitchener sent mounted infantry in pursuit, and although Cronje covered thirty miles of country in his night retreat from Magersfontein, he was unable to shake off the converging forces. At length Cronje found himself held up at Paardeberg. French had swept on from Kimberley to head him off by closing the last loophole of escape, while the rest of the British forces drew round him until he was trapped.

Cronje set up a gallant resistance in strong trenches, while De Wet did his utmost to open for him a way of escape. Fierce fighting took place, and the Boer laager was pounded by artillery-fire. At length the hard-pressed Boer general asked for an armistice to bury his dead; but it was refused, for Roberts guessed rightly it was a ruse to allow time for Boer reinforcements to come up. On 27th February Cronje surrendered with over 4000 burghers, who had fought with great skill and courage against much superior forces.

De Wet has described in his book the effect that this disaster had on the burghers. "No words", he says, "can describe my feelings when I saw that Cronje had surrendered, and noted the result which this had on the burghers. Depression and discouragement were written on every face. The effects of this blow, it is not too much to say, made themselves apparent to the very end of the war." Immediately after Cronje's surrender Ladysmith was relieved, Buller having at length succeeded in making a decisive move forward in Natal.

To Kitchener, who organized the transport for the force which rounded up Cronje, much of the credit of the crushing blow is due.

The next move forward was towards Bloemfontein, the capital of the Orange Free State. With a widely extended force Lord Roberts advanced steadily. The Boers occupied strong positions, but, finding themselves outflanked again and again, had to retreat towards the north. After a few skirmishes Bloemfontein was occupied on 13th March.

Six weeks later the advance on Pretoria was begun. But before it was reached Mafeking was relieved.

There were dramatic happenings at Pretoria after the hills commanding it were occupied on a clear June morning. First came the release of British prisoners, and then the triumphant march past of troops in the central square of the city, while the Union Jack fluttered for the first time from the summit of the Raad-saal.

The occupation of Pretoria, however, did not bring the war to an end. Mobile forces of Boers swept

hither and thither through the Transvaal and Orange Free State, which was called, after formal annexation, the Orange River Colony. Here and there British garrisons were surrounded and cut off, convoys were captured, and attacks made on the lines of communication. General Botha was active in the Transvaal, while General De Wet, whose brilliant achievements in guerrilla warfare won him general admiration, kept large forces constantly employed in the endeavour to round him up. On one occasion he almost captured Kitchener. The Chief of Staff was travelling by a train which the Boers planned to attack one night near Leeuwspruit Bridge. A fierce fire was opened upon it, but fortunately the burghers did not approach it closely as it lay in a siding of a little station. Out of a compartment leapt Lord Kitchener. He darted round towards a wagon and had a horse taken from it. Mounting the animal, he vanished into the darkness and made good his escape. The man who had more than once outwitted the Der-vishes was not to be caught even by the slim Boers.

One of Kitchener's famous achievements was the relief of an Australian force at Brakfontein, on the Elands River. About 400 of the gallant sons of the Commonwealth had occupied a kopje, and were cut off and surrounded by over 2000 Boers with six guns. For eleven days they held out, having constructed trenches and "dug-outs", which protected them from shell-fire. Supplies ran short, and water was obtained with difficulty from the river, which was half a mile distant from their position. Kitchener found them much exhausted, but determined, if the worst

had come, to die to the last man rather than hoist the white flag.

The guerrilla warfare seemed to be drawing to an end towards the close of the year. Lord Roberts left South Africa, and Lord Kitchener succeeded him as Commander-in-Chief. Rumours at once went into circulation that there had been differences between the two great soldiers, but Lord Roberts, after arriving at Southampton, declared:—

As Chief of the Staff of the army in South Africa Lord Kitchener has been my right-hand man throughout the campaign, and I am glad to take this opportunity of publicly expressing how much I owe to his wise counsels and ever-ready help. No one could have laboured more incessantly, or in a more self-effacing manner, than Lord Kitchener has done, and no one could have assisted me more loyally without a thought of self-aggrandizement.

It was generally believed at this time that the Boer resistance could not be kept up for many months longer; but, as it happened, the war continued for a further eighteen months. No great battles were fought, but the guerrilla tactics of the Boers kept large forces of British troops employed. For a time there were threats of a rising of the Cape Dutch.

Kitchener found it necessary to ask for reinforcements. Fresh enlistments took place, and in February, 1901, soon after Queen Victoria had died and King Edward was proclaimed British Sovereign and "Lord of and over the Transvaal", about 30,000 troops reached South Africa. These included mounted infantry from the home country and the Colonies.

About this time General Botha had a meeting with

Lord Kitchener at Middelberg to discuss terms of peace. They greeted one another with feelings of mutual respect, and Kitchener afterwards wrote Botha a letter from Pretoria in which he set forth in detail the proposals of his Government, which included an offer of a million pounds sterling to repay the inhabitants of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony for goods requisitioned by the Boer commandants for military purposes. He also stated: "It is the desire of His Majesty's Government, as soon as circumstances permit, to . . . concede to the new Colonies the privilege of self-government". The efforts of Botha and Kitchener to arrange peace terms were not, however, successful.

During the long summer the war dragged on. Great sweeping movements of British troops, called "drives", were conducted to clear the wide areas in which the Boers operated. The wearing down of the Boer resistance was a slow process, although about seventy British columns were kept almost constantly on the move. Time and again attempts were made to round up De Wet, who, however, always escaped from the net which was being drawn about him.

Lord Kitchener introduced a system of blockhouses to protect the railways, which were being continually attacked. When a force of Boer raiders came near, fire was opened on them from the little forts, and then an armoured train would dash along and scatter the attackers.

It was not until March, 1902, that the Boer executive definitely decided to sue for peace. In May a conference of Boers was held at Vereeniging, after

which a commission, consisting of Botha, De Wet, De la Rey, Hertzog, and Smuts visited Lord Kitchener and Lord Milner at Pretoria. Peace terms were arranged, and the war came to an end on 31st May.

The thanks of the British Government were cabled to Lord Kitchener in the following terms on 4th June:

His Majesty's Government offer you their most sincere congratulations on the energy, skill, and patience with which you have conducted this prolonged campaign, and would wish you to communicate to the troops under your command their profound sense of the spirit and endurance with which they have met every call made upon them, of their bravery in action, of the excellent discipline preserved, and of the humanity shown by them throughout this trying period.

Kitchener, who was referred to by Mr. Asquith as "the great patient general", was created a Viscount and decorated by King Edward with the Order of Merit.

Before leaving Pretoria, Lord Kitchener arranged a thanksgiving service, which about 6000 soldiers attended. It was held in front of the Government Buildings, and "was impressive to the full", records a writer in the *Spectator*.

The hymns of which the service was mainly composed were well chosen, and throughout there was an entire absence of any triumphing over men who were beaten, of any desire to make it hard for the conquered. Everything spoke a sober rejoicing, not at victory over the enemy, but at the achievement of peace—the desired end after so many labours. Every item in the service had been chosen personally by Lord Kitchener, and showed the chivalrous spirit in which he had conceived the whole occasion. He had, indeed, rejected the idea of a march past, since it might suggest exultation over a defeated enemy.

At Cape Town Lord Kitchener delivered an address at a farewell banquet held in his honour. Of the Boers, whose courage and discipline he praised, he said: "Whatever our previous opinion, we have come to realize that they are a virile race, and an asset of considerable importance to the British Empire".

To the soldiers who were present he addressed himself in soldierly terms, saying:—

What have you learned during the war? Some have learned to ride and shoot; all of you have learned discipline, to be stanch and steadfast in the hour of danger, to attack with vigour, to hold what you have gained.

You can never forget the true friends and comrades by whose side you have stood in a hundred fights. Even the hardships which you have so cheerfully endured will in the remembrance be only pleasures.

Teach the youth that come after you what you have learned. Keep your horses and rifles ready, and your bodies physically fit, so that you may be prepared at any time to take your part in the great Empire which unites us all.

CHAPTER XI

THE YEARS OF PREPARATION

It often happens that the greatness of a man like Kitchener is not realized until after he passes away. He was honoured during life as a brave soldier, a masterly organizer, and a wise administrator, but not until after the great war broke out did his countrymen realize fully that he was not only a "tower of strength" in the hour of need, but also a symbol of



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LORD KITCHENER AS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
IN SOUTH AFRICA (1900-1902)

British power. When he died his life-work seemed to be finished, as Nelson's was when he fell in the hour of victory at Trafalgar.

Born in the middle of the nineteenth century—Nelson was born in the middle of the eighteenth—his life now seems to have been infused with high purpose. He moved from success to success, and the intervals were occupied with the arduous work of preparation. Kitchener's triumphs were the results of tireless efforts directed with one end in view, and that end was efficiency. He felt, as he said to a distinguished American whom he met when on his holiday tour, that "the surest safeguard for peace is to be ready always for war". His countrymen learned to trust him as a strong man whose ideal was to maintain the strength and steadfastness of the British Empire with its inspiring traditions—the great empire "which", as he himself said, "unites us all".

During his lifetime a new chapter of the world's history was written. He had seen the sudden rise of Germany's military power, and, as a young man, had fought against the future enemies of his native land, who were to threaten the stability of the British Empire. He had seen the Balkan States win independence, and in Palestine and Asia Minor obtained intimate knowledge of the Turkish problem which was to bulk prominently in the coming struggle. In Egypt and the Sudan he served his country and the cause of civilization, having been enabled in part to do so by his experiences in Palestine, which prepared him for the duties of after life. His military career in South Africa was made possible by his successes in

the Nile valley. He was born at the right time, and had the necessary experience and knowledge to be of signal service to the Empire when its need was greatest. The hour came, and with it the man who was ready because he had made preparation when there was time and opportunity to do so.

Kitchener could never be idle. We see him pass during his busy lifetime from new task to new task with the delight of one who loves his work and finds satisfaction in doing it thoroughly. No sooner did he finish the survey of Palestine than he was engaged to do similar work in Cyprus, and no sooner did he open up the Sudan to trade and lay the basis of progressive civilization than he was called to South Africa, where, after the war he so successfully concluded, was to emerge a brighter era of unity between rival races. The South African Union, we now know, has added to the strength of the British Empire, and has ensured the future development of a great and powerful State.

When his military task in South Africa was finished, the new task of preparation for the coming struggle fell to his lot. He was no party politician, nor did he take any share in international politics. His concern was with the military defences of the Empire as a whole. He was a soldier, and he regarded all problems with a soldier's eyes. The new task he undertook began in India, and neither he nor anyone else foresaw that it would not be completed until, amidst the convulsions of empires, the Kitchener army of British citizen soldiers would come into being.

Towards the end of 1902 Kitchener went out to the

East to take up his duties as Commander-in-Chief of the Army in India. On his way he visited Khartoum, where he formally opened the Gordon Memorial College, which, as has been indicated, owes its existence to him. It is a "self-effacing" symbol of his work in the Sudan, for it is really a "Kitchener Memorial College".

In India the great organizer spent seven strenuous years. His aim was to increase the efficiency of the army there, and his success in this direction has been emphasized by the part taken in the great war by the native soldiers of India. His purpose was expressed in a characteristic speech which he delivered to the Viceroy's Council after he had carried out many reforms:—

A modern army is not a costly toy maintained for purposes of ceremonial and display; nor, on the other hand, is it an instrument of aggression. It is simply an insurance against national disaster.

The expenditure incurred on it is strictly comparable with private expenditure on similarly precautionary measures. The first business condition necessary to justify our national expenditure is that the army maintained should be in a thoroughly efficient state, and therefore able at all times of need to carry out whatever may be expected from its numerical strength.

Expenditure on an inefficient army cannot be defended; and the application of business methods to army administration means that we must never for one moment lose sight of the fact that the efficiency of an army maintained as the ultimate guarantee of public security must be purchased at the lowest possible price.

When King George, then Prince of Wales, visited India in 1906 he "had the pleasure", as he told afterwards,¹ "of staying with Lord Kitchener in his

¹ Speech at the Guild-hall in May, 1906.

camp of manoeuvres". His Majesty said: "I was struck with the general fitness and splendid appearance of the British troops, with the physique and power of endurance of the native army, and the dash of its cavalry, while throughout the army I found an earnest desire for increased efficiency and for readiness to take the field".

During his residence in India Kitchener's home was Wildflower Hall. He found it an ideal retreat during the hot season, for it is situated among the hills near Simla, at a height of 8000 feet above sea-level. Here he sought to imitate the beautiful gardens that surround his seventeenth-century English house, Broome Park, Canterbury. Under his direction coolies were employed laying out the grounds according to his design, until Wildflower Hall became famous for its landscape-gardening.

One of his visitors, a Scottish clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Maclean, of Peebles, has given interesting impressions of Kitchener, whom he visited at Wildflower Hall. "As we walked round the garden", he says, "I found that Lord Kitchener knew the names of the latest roses grown in England in previous seasons, and when he took Mrs. Maclean round the drawing-room he discussed his embroideries with keenness and knowledge.

"When I saw him again at a Freemasons' gathering, I found the Commander-in-Chief was the keenest of Freemasons, and I could not help remarking to the chief of his staff: 'Isn't it extraordinary that a man who has such a heavy burden on his shoulders should be interested in these little things?'



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Boorne & Shepherd

LORD KITCHENER AS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF IN INDIA

(1902-1909)

“‘Ah!’ said the Chief of Staff; ‘that’s just like him. He’s interested in everything he comes across.’”

On one occasion the Commander-in-Chief met with a distressing accident which might have had a fatal result. He had been visiting a friend near Simla, and was riding home. The mountain road at one point enters a tunnel, and just after he rode into it a coolie appeared suddenly, moving in deep shadow. The horse shied and struck heavily against a jutting piece of rock on the side of the tunnel. Kitchener was severely injured, two bones in one of his legs being broken. He dropped out of the saddle, as the horse reared on its hind legs, and fell heavily. The affrighted animal bolted.

Alarmed by what had happened, the coolie, without waiting to attend the fallen officer, ran towards Simla. There he related what had taken place, and a number of natives at once set out to ascertain who had been injured, and to give whatever assistance was possible. When, however, they found that the officer was Lord Kitchener they became much excited and fled in a panic.

For over half an hour the Commander-in-Chief lay in the tunnel, suffering great pain. Then some coolies who were returning to Simla with a rickshaw came along and entered the tunnel. Kitchener called to them, and they lifted him into the light conveyance and brought him into the town, which lay only a mile distant. Happily the Commander-in-Chief made an excellent, although slow, recovery.

In 1909, after completing his term of service, Kitchener, who had been raised to the rank of Field-

Marshal, went on what he called "a holiday tour"; but it was not all a holiday. Having visited China and then Japan, where he was received with enthusiasm and respect, he spent some time in Australia. On the invitation of the authorities he set to work on a scheme for the military defence of the Commonwealth. This scheme was to provide Australia, in seven years' time, with "an army of 80,000 men, raised by universal services, with officers trained on the U.S.A. model of West Point, and attached from time to time to regiments in Great Britain and India". The Australians admired Kitchener. "He seemed the embodiment of what Britain most needed," one Australian writer has declared. "His great merit was that he was an organizer, and had the temperament and personality for organization."

An interesting and touching story, which revealed the depth of feeling in Kitchener, is told in connection with this Australian visit. At a dinner-party, given in honour of the great soldier, Madame Melba, the famous singer, was one of the guests. She was asked by several to sing, and at first did not wish to do so. But, when Kitchener, with a smile, addressed her and said, "Madame, I have been an exile for eight years, won't you sing me just one verse of 'Home, Sweet Home'?", she gladly did as she was asked. "And if you could have seen the tears in his eyes as he kissed my hand, unable to speak," says Melba, "you would not have said he was hard and cold."¹

After visiting New Zealand, where he also prepared a scheme for the military training of a citizen army,

¹ *The Bulletin* (Sydney), 15th June, 1916.

Kitchener returned home in April, 1910. People wondered what work would next be found for him to do. As was truly said of him: "The nation, feeling more than ever the need of his peculiar qualities, will insist on working him so long as he has an ounce of vitality left. It is not a question of whether, but of where and how, he shall continue to be employed." In October he was given a seat on the Committee of Imperial Defence. But he did not remain long in London. The post of British Agent in Egypt became vacant owing to the death of Sir Eldon Gorst, Lord Cromer's successor, and Lord Kitchener was asked to take up the duties. This he consented to do, and set out for Egypt in the latter part of 1911.

There were critics at the time who believed he was not the right man for the post, and argued that "a statesman and not a soldier was wanted". Sir Edward Grey, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, took up a firm stand. "I am confident", he said in the House of Commons, "that the qualities possessed by Lord Kitchener, his special knowledge and experience in Egyptian affairs, and his impartiality and capacity make the appointment one which will command general confidence. He has shown great capacity not only as a soldier. The appointment in Egypt is an exceedingly difficult one to fill, as everybody knows. It requires special knowledge, special experience, and special qualities. I do not know of anyone who possesses that special knowledge and experience and those qualities in so high a degree as Lord Kitchener."

The confidence placed in him was fully justified.

Hardly eighteen months had passed when warm tributes were paid to his work. The occasion was when the proposal was made to appoint him Viceroy of India. "He cannot be spared by Egypt," declared one authority after another. "During the eighteen months that he has been in the country", said Professor John Todd of Nottingham University College, who had been five years in Egypt, "he has completely changed the whole face of things." Another authority—G. N. Sarruf Bey—said: "Lord Kitchener is the most popular figure in Egypt to-day. He has made all the Egyptians realize that he is the friend of the Egyptians and understands their needs. . . . He is accessible to all. Anybody with a grievance is free to go and lay it before him, confident of obtaining a fair and patient hearing."

At the British Agency many deputations waited upon Kitchener, whom the fellaheen called "El Lord". He introduced many reforms in the interests of the peasant landholders. Among other things he caused to be done was to protect the fellaheen against the money-lenders by making it illegal for a creditor to sell a small holding under mortgage. Savings-banks were established and cotton markets set up, so that the small farmers might sell their produce at market prices and be no longer at the mercy of dealers who had long been prospering at their expense. "Truly", declared G. N. Sarruf Bey, "he is the friend of the fellah, and he has introduced a whole series of reforms to improve the peasant's lot." One of his favourite schemes was to reclaim waste land by irrigation, and make free gifts of small farms to deserving peasants.

In the summer of 1914 he was in London, where he discussed with the Government certain reforms he desired to be carried out in Egypt for the benefit of its inhabitants. Then, suddenly, the shadow of war loomed like an approaching thunderstorm over Europe.

As on the occasion of his visit to Egypt, just before the bombardment of Alexandria, Kitchener seemed to have arrived at the right place just at the right time. Little did he dream when he left the British Agency at Cairo that he was soon to undertake the highest and most weighty responsibilities of his career—responsibilities, indeed, for which during his whole life he now seems to have been preparing.

CHAPTER XII

THE GREAT WAR AND THE END

The war cloud, which was to overshadow not only Europe, but almost the entire world, seemed at first no bigger than a man's hand. Trouble had arisen between Austria and Serbia over the murder in Bosnia of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the throne of Austro-Hungary. It was alleged that Serbian politicians had been concerned in this murder, and on 23rd July, 1914, Austria dispatched to the Government of the little State an ultimatum which contained humiliating demands.

Russia, as protector of the Balkan Slav nations,

intervened on behalf of Serbia, with the praiseworthy desire to have the dispute settled peacefully. The efforts of the Tsar's Government, however, were without avail. On 28th July Austria declared war against Serbia.

Russia had begun to mobilize, and on 1st August Germany, as the ally of Austria, having supported its attack on the liberties of Serbia, declared war on Russia. France as Russia's ally was then involved, and Germany declared war on France on 3rd August.

Germany endeavoured without delay to strike a staggering blow against France through Belgium and Luxemburg, although the neutrality of both States was guaranteed by international treaty.

As one of the signatories of the treaty, Great Britain protested against the German violation of Belgium, and when the Kaiser's army crossed the frontier of that small State, in defiance of the British protest, Great Britain declared war on Germany on 4th August. Six days later France declared war on Austria, and two days afterwards Great Britain did the same. On 23rd August Japan, the ally of Great Britain, declared war on Germany.

The events which led to the world war moved with great rapidity. In this country, where to the last moment endeavours were made to arrange a peaceful settlement, the situation became exceedingly grave when Germany declared war on Russia on 1st August. It, however, became graver next day when the Kaiser's Government issued its ultimatum to Belgium, demanding that German troops should pass unhampered through its neutral territory to attack France.

Mr. Asquith, Prime Minister of Great Britain, who was acting temporarily as War Secretary, held a war conference. It was felt that the crisis which had been reached called for a British War Secretary of exceptional ability and experience—a soldier who was also an administrator. Again the hour had come, and with it the man! That man was Earl Kitchener.

His lordship had just left London for Dover. He was to cross the Channel to travel by train to Marseilles, from which port he intended to take steamer back to Egypt. At Dover he received an urgent message to return at once to London. On the following day, 3rd August, he had a conference with Mr. Asquith, and consented to join the Cabinet as Secretary of State for War. This was on the day before Britain declared war against Germany.

Among the events which resulted from the war was the change brought about in Britain's position in Egypt. Ere long Turkey joined forces with Germany, and found itself at war with the Allied Powers. Britain then declared a Protectorate over Egypt. The suzerainty of Turkey over the country was thus terminated. "His Majesty's Government", it was announced, "will adopt all measures for the defence of Egypt and the protection of its inhabitants and interests." Instead of a British Agent, a British High Commissioner was then appointed in Egypt, and the post was given to Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Arthur M'Mahon. In addition, the Khedive, who had made common cause with the enemies of Egypt and Britain, was deposed. At the time he was sojourning at Constantinople. It was also announced

that the King had approved of the appointment of His Highness Prince Hussein as Sultan of Egypt. This new ruler of the ancient land is the uncle of the deposed Khedive, Abbas Pasha Hilmi, the second son of the first Khedive, Ismail Pasha, and brother of Tewfik Pasha, the second Khedive, under whom Gordon served as Governor-General of the Sudan.

Kitchener's appointment as Secretary of State for War was the realization of one of his cherished ambitions. He had long wanted to preside at the War Office. In the days when he was campaigning in the Sudan he had passed severe criticisms upon this department of State. "During many an evening in camp or bivouac", wrote "A Staff Officer" in *Blackwood's Magazine*, two years before the great war broke out, "Kitchener often talked long, openly, and convincingly upon reforms needed in the War Office and the army. Of his opinions on these points it is too soon to speak, for he may yet have occasion to put them into practice. So I shall only say that they are calculated to produce a very considerable fluttering in Pall Mall dovecots and among the old women of both sexes when Big Ben chimes out K.'s hour of office and responsibility."

Steevens, the war correspondent, wrote of him after the conquest of the Sudan: "There are some who nurse a desperate hope that he may some day be appointed to sweep out the War Office. He would be a splendid manager of the War Office. He would be a splendid manager of anything."

Kitchener's work was arduous from the outset. Day and night saw him at the War Office. Lord



LORD KITCHENER MEETING IN FRANCE WITH GENERAL BARATTIER

who was a lieutenant under Marchand at Fashoda

Fisher was at the time at the Admiralty, and the *Church Family Newspaper*, in the early days of the war, related the interesting fact that both these distinguished administrators made a habit of going to certain churches in London each morning for prayer and meditation before beginning their responsible duties.

Kitchener's first task was to send an expeditionary force to France. The movement of troops was kept secret by the press. Indeed, many soldiers were crossing the Channel before they knew whither they were bound. "Thanks to the cordial co-operation of the Admiralty", as Kitchener afterwards said of this great operation, the troops were sent abroad "with perfect smoothness and without any untoward incident whatever."

Each soldier received a personal message from Kitchener in the form of a printed letter, in which he said:—

You are ordered abroad as a soldier of the King to help our French comrades against the invasion of the common enemy. You have to perform a task which will need your courage, your energy, your patience. Remember that the honour of the British army depends on your individual conduct.

It will be your duty not only to set an example of discipline and perfect steadiness under fire, but also to maintain the most friendly relations with those whom you are helping in the struggle. The operations in which you are engaged will, for the most part, take place in a friendly country, and you can do your own country no better service than in showing yourself in France and Belgium in the true character of a British soldier.

Be invariably courteous, considerate, and kind. Never do anything likely to injure or destroy property, and always look upon looting as a disgraceful act. You are sure to meet with a welcome

and to be trusted; your conduct must justify that welcome and that trust. . . .

Do your duty bravely.

Fear God.

Honour the King.

KITCHENER,

Field-Marshal.

Lord Kitchener made his first appearance in the House of Lords as a Minister of the Crown on 25th August. This occasion was one of great public interest. The House was hushed and deeply moved as he rose and began to read his statement with rough, soldierly voice, but in level pleasant tones that rang through the Chamber. "As a soldier", he declared, "I have no politics." He spoke of his new appointment in the manner of a soldier.

The terms of my service are the same as those under which some of the finest portions of our manhood, now so willingly stepping forward to join the colours, are engaging—that is to say, for the war, or if it lasts longer than three years, then for three years. It has been asked why the latter limit has been fixed. It is because, should this disastrous war be prolonged—and no one can foretell with any certainty its duration—then after three years' war there will be others fresh and fully prepared to take our places and see this matter through.

It would almost seem as if he felt he would not live to see the end of the war.

He spoke of the "vast reserve of men, drawn from the resources both of the Mother Country and of the British Dominions across the seas" and the loyalty of the Territorials and new recruits who had volunteered for foreign service. He was unable to announce what the ultimate requirements of the army would be, but he was confident that the Empire as

a whole would respond to whatever call was made. His words are memorable:—

The very serious conflict in which we are now engaged on the Continent has been none of our seeking. It will undoubtedly strain the resources of our Empire and entail considerable sacrifices on our people. These will be willingly borne for our honour and the preservation of our position in the world, and will be shared by our Dominions beyond the seas, now sending contingents and assistance of every kind to help the Mother Country in this struggle.

The response made by the Dominions was a revelation to the whole world of the resources and strength of the British Empire. Twenty-nine years had elapsed since Australia first took part in a British war in which its own immediate interests were not threatened. This was during the campaign in the eastern Sudan, when a New South Wales contingent fought side by side with soldiers from the Mother Country and India. In his farewell to the Australians at Suakin, in May, 1885, Lord Wolseley had said:—

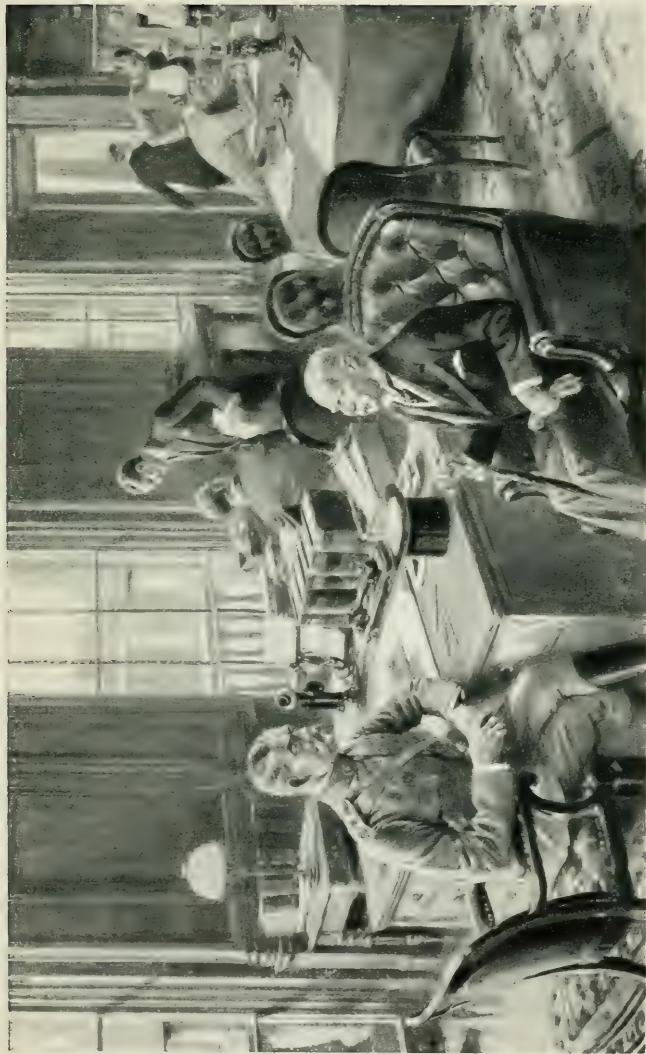
The fact of New South Wales being able to send such troops will probably deter any Power from hastily entering upon a war with Britain. The Australians have individually and collectively deserved the esteem of their comrades in arms.

In South Africa Kitchener had under his command contingents from Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. But even the Continental military authorities did not realize fully what reserves of military strength existed in the overseas dominions of the British Empire. When the great crisis of 1914 came, however, Kitchener, who had laboured to improve the military organization of Australia and New Zealand, and had also

first-hand knowledge of Canada's military strength, foresaw what great help would be forthcoming from the self-governing Dominions, which were united with the Mother Country by a strong patriotism, based on common traditions and love of freedom and right. His seven years of work in India as Commander-in-Chief had also given him an intimate knowledge of India's military resources. He had, indeed, reorganized the army in India, and it was ready for any call. Before long the brave and gallant soldiers of India crossed the seas in thousands to fight side by side with the soldiers of Britain, France, and Belgium against the common enemy.

Not only was Kitchener, as War Secretary, able, with his vast knowledge and experience and his proved ability as an organizer, to utilize the military resources of the Empire—he proved to be an inspiration to his fellow-countrymen. Time and again he called for recruits, and each time the response made exceeded the demand. Men of all ranks in everyday life came forward to fight for their country. His rare public speeches were stirring and eloquent; they appealed to the highest instincts of our people, for they were infused by the great soldier's own sense of duty and manliness of purpose. About a year after the outbreak of war he made a characteristic speech at the Guild-hall, London, in which he appealed for more recruits. Some of his sentences, like those which follow, will long be remembered:—

It has been well said that in every man's life there is one supreme hour towards which all earlier experiences move and from which all future results may be reckoned.



LORD KITCHENER AT THE WAR OFFICE; A VISIT FROM LORD ROBERTS

For every individual Briton—as well as for our national existence—that solemn hour is now striking. Let us take heed to the great opportunity it offers, and which assuredly we must grasp—now and at once, or never.

Let each man of us see that we spare nothing, shirk nothing, shrink from nothing, if only we may lend our full weight to the impetus which shall carry to victory the cause of our honour and of our freedom.

He wished all young men to volunteer for service, and not to wait until a conscription measure was passed into law. His message to them was direct and dignified:—

If you are only ready to go when you are fetched, where is the merit of that? Where is the patriotism of it? Are you only going to do your duty when the law says you must? Does the call to duty find no response in you until reinforced—let us rather say superseded—by the call of compulsion? It is not for me to tell you your duty; that is a matter for your conscience.

Earl Kitchener was also an inspiration to his countrymen in another sense. When the hour of crisis was darkest he spoke reassuring and confident words. He had a thorough grasp of the military situation. The Germans might boast of success, and impress even the hopeful public of Great Britain. But Kitchener looked far ahead, and when he saw that the enemy's plans were being thwarted he spoke out frankly. Paris still seemed in danger of envelopment when the Battle of the Aisne was waging furiously. A degree of despondency had fallen on the country, but Kitchener announced in the House of Lords, ere yet success had been achieved: "The tide has now turned". It soon transpired that he had read the situation aright. The Germans were held

up. Paris had been saved, and the French Government, which had gone to Bordeaux, was able to return to the capital.

In the autumn of 1915 the Russian forces had been driven back on the Eastern Front, and Germany claimed almost to have won the war. Kitchener's review of the situation was, however, at once shrewd and far-seeing. In a speech delivered in the House of Lords he spoke of Germany's numerical strength and its superior artillery, and then said:—

The German objective was evidently to destroy the Russian army as a force in being, and thus to set free large numbers of their troops for action elsewhere; but as in the case of many other plans arranged by the German Staff during the war, there has been a signal failure to carry out the original intentions.

He spoke of the splendid qualities of leadership displayed by the Russian command. A retreat of from 100 to 200 miles over a front of 750 miles had been successfully carried out, "without allowing the enemy to break through at any point, or by surrounding their forces to bring about a tactical position which might have involved a surrender of a considerable portion of the Russian army".

The pessimists thought Russia's military power had been broken almost beyond repair, but Kitchener's firm and reassuring declaration was as follows:—

We see the Russian army remaining to-day intact as a fighting force.

The Germans appear almost to have shot their bolt.

The Russian army is still a powerful and undefeated unit.

While the Germans have prevailed by sheer weight of guns, and at immense cost to themselves, in forcing back the Russian

front, nothing but barren territory and evacuated fortresses have been gained. *Thus their strategy has clearly failed, and victories they claim may only prove, as military history has so often demonstrated, to be defeats in disguise.*

The work accomplished by Earl Kitchener as War Secretary will, in future days, be regarded as of great historical importance. He had not only to direct the organization and equipment of the existing army, but to raise a great new army, which became familiarly known as "Kitchener's Army". His call for recruits stirred the Empire to its depths. Under his care battalion after battalion and division after division sprang into being. The new soldiers had to be trained, clothed, fed, and paid. Kitchener had to provide for all their requirements. He had also to extend and perfect the administrative machinery at the War Office. And while thus engaged he carried on his shoulders the responsibility of supplying and keeping up to strength the army at the front. Well he knew that failure on his part meant ruin and humiliation not only to himself but to the British Empire.

In addition to his work as a soldier and administrator, he had to carry on his duties as a statesman and a member of the Cabinet. He had to take his share in directing the policy of the Government, and in explaining and defending that policy in the House of Lords, at public meetings, and at private conferences. He also helped to solve labour problems. Labour leaders who met him in private were impressed by his frank, open manner, his plain speaking, and absolute purity of motive. "Lord Kitchener", it has

been confessed by those immediately concerned, "acquired an influence over most of the Labour men who met him."

At one of these conferences he is reported to have said: "There is no room for pessimism. Give me the men and the war munitions I want and I will guarantee my personal reputation that we have the war in the hollow of our hands. I know how many men I want for munitions. I have their names and the numbers on their doors, and if they do not come I will fetch them."

Happily it did not become necessary to "fetch" the workers. They heard him, heeded him, and trusted in him.

To the soldiers at the front—those of the old army as well as the new—Kitchener was an inspiration also. "People at home", a Scottish Guardsman wrote, "do not realize what the word 'Kitchener' means to the private soldier. That word means 'success'. 'Tommy' trusts in Kitchener to carry us through. 'Kitchener wouldn't take on the job if he couldn't carry it out.' That's the feeling in the army to a man, and I think I ought to know."

Kitchener's visits to the front were the occasions of warm demonstrations from our peerless fighting-men, who loved and admired the strong, stern leader—the very symbol of resolute efficiency. He understood the private soldiers, and when he addressed them he spoke like a soldier. Occasionally, in the midst of his engrossing duties at home, he found time to visit a military hospital. "The sight of him", one wounded man has told, "was like a tonic. You felt

the better for it. You wanted to get up at once, fall in, and take the first train to the port of sailing on your way back to the trenches." One day he entered a London hospital in which were many soldiers who had been wounded in the early conflicts of the war. He was not expected, and there was no ceremony. As he made appearance in a ward, every man who was able to, stood at attention; those who could sit up in bed raised their hands to the salute. Kitchener went round among the patients, and spoke in a blunt, kindly, encouraging way.

"Well, what have you been through?" he asked one man, who immediately gave him a brief but vivid account of his experiences.

"You did splendidly," he said in his manly, encouraging way. These three words from the Field-Marshal were worth a volume of praise from another.

"Well, where were you wounded!" Kitchener asked another.

"Here, sir," was the answer, "but the surgeon can't find the bullet."

"No matter," smiled Kitchener. "Bullets don't hurt much nowadays. I carried one in my neck for three years. Get well as soon as possible." The reference was to the wound he sustained in the eastern Sudan when fighting against Osman Digna.

As a soldier and member of the Government Kitchener went abroad in the capacity of an ambassador with a roving commission. He got information for the Cabinet at first hand, and he was able to inform the authorities of allied Powers regarding the policy and aspirations of Great Britain, as well

as the vast military preparations which were being made.

"He takes with him", Mr. Asquith said in connection with one of Kitchener's tours, "the authority of the great soldier and the great administrator, and added to that the special faculties of insight and judgment which he derived from an unrivalled knowledge and experience of the Near East." This statement was made specially in connection with the visit which Kitchener paid to Gallipoli and Greece.

But it was not only in the Near East that Kitchener's Palestinian and Egyptian experiences proved useful. When in France, in the autumn of 1915, he visited the front. Among the troops he reviewed was a division of the French African army. To a native officer belonging to the Algerian Spahis he addressed some words in Arabic. The dusky warrior was surprised and delighted to find the great British officer conversant with his native tongue.

Kitchener told the leaders of the Algerian troops in fluent Arabic that they could have entire confidence in the final success of the cause of the Allies.

A native officer replied that all his men had absolute faith in an ultimate victory.

"It was astonishing," an eye-witness has related, "to see the effect which Kitchener's words had on the Algerians. To them he seemed not only a great general, but also an inspired prophet. He knew exactly what to say, and left an impression which increased the *moral* of the gallant African soldiers. He understood them, and they knew it and it delighted them. Who could doubt regarding the

future, even when the prospect seemed dark, after that mighty soldier, who spoke like an African, had said that victory was assured?"

It was on the occasion of this visit that Kitchener had an unexpected meeting with General Baratier, who commanded a division of cavalry which suddenly appeared as Kitchener was motoring to another point on the French front. Baratier had been a lieutenant in the Marchand Mission and met Kitchener at Fashoda. Both were greatly surprised, and not a little amused, at their unexpected meeting. Kitchener took the French officer's hand and shook it warmly, recalling in a few words their former meeting. He asked for news of Marchand, whom he afterwards met also and conversed with in most friendly manner, the one chaffing the other regarding their doings in the Sudan.

The French soldiers always welcomed Kitchener. They all knew that as a young man he had fought for France, and they were acquainted with his brilliant achievements as a British soldier. The people of France also greeted him with genuine French cordiality. In Paris the streets were crowded to receive him. Even in the little villages the news of his coming excited feelings of delight and enthusiasm.

Banquets were given in his honour by the French authorities. The addresses delivered were not always formal and of purely official character. Kitchener admired the French and the French admired Kitchener. General Joffre and he, and M. Millerand, the War Minister, and he, were the warmest of per-

sonal friends. The Frenchmen were touched by Kitchener's warm tribute to the gallantry of their army and the efforts of their Government. "The repeated testimony of admiration and confidence," said M. Millerand at one dinner, "which in the course of these two days General Joffre and I have heard from your lips, will be a recompense and encouragement."

Kitchener was deeply moved. "The words of M. Millerand", he declared in the course of his reply, "have gone straight to my heart, and the personal and mutual friendship of ours will be greater after our visit to the front."

Serbia had been overrun by the enemy, and the fighting in Gallipoli was yielding no satisfactory results when Kitchener paid his winter visit to the Near East in 1915. "He has gone", Mr. Asquith announced, "to survey at close quarters, and in intimate conference with our own representatives, and those of our allies, the whole situation of the Eastern theatre of war."

There were conflicting views among the military advisers of the Government regarding the situation on the Gallipoli Peninsula. Difficulties were also being experienced at Salonika, which had been occupied by French and British troops so that it might be used as a base of operations against the Austro-German and Bulgarian conquerors of Serbia. The attitude of the Greek Government was uncertain. Salonika was a Greek port, and grave questions regarding the Allies' use of it had arisen.

Kitchener's appearance on the Gallipoli Peninsula

was a surprise to the fighting-men. They had accomplished great things, and were experiencing considerable hardships owing to the character of the country and the trying weather. Everywhere the great War Minister received a hearty welcome. The men were encouraged and delighted by his visit.

At Anzac Kitchener received a specially warm welcome from the Australians. "They do not cheer readily," a correspondent related at the time, "but when they saw Kitchener they broke out into spontaneous cheers again and again. They gave him a real soldier's welcome."

Addressing a group of Australians, Kitchener said: "His Majesty the King has asked me to tell you how splendidly he thinks you have done. You have done excellently", he added; "better than I thought you would."

In a special order issued by General Birdwood to the Australian and New Zealand corps under his command it was said: "Lord Kitchener has ordered me to express to all the very great pleasure it gives to have an opportunity—which he considers a privilege—of visiting Anzac to see for himself some of the wonderfully good work which has been done by the officers and men of our army corps, as it was not until he had himself seen the positions we have captured and hold that he was able fully to realize the magnitude of the work which has been accomplished. . . . He was very pleased to see a considerable portion of the officers and men, and to find all in such good heart and so confidently imbued with that grand spirit which has carried them through all their trials

and many dangerous feats of arms, a spirit which he is quite confident they will maintain to the end, until they have taken their full share in completely overthrowing your enemies."

Kitchener had an amusing experience with a blunt Australian of few words. This soldier was standing beside a canteen carried on by the Sydney Y.M.C.A. It had proved a boon to Australian and British soldiers, but at the time of Kitchener's visit it was not particularly well stocked with supplies.

"Hallo!" Kitchener exclaimed as he came up. "A Y.M.C.A. hut!" He spoke to the Australian soldier, and asked: "Well, what can one get here?"

"Nuts," was the laconic answer.

"Yes," Kitchener said, "but what can you get generally?"

"Nothing," was the gloomy answer.

Tickled by his manner—he was plainly a man who had come to purchase something not in stock—Kitchener laughed heartily and passed on.

He visited the various important points at Suvla Bay, and afterwards went to other parts of the peninsula occupied by British troops. The ultimate result of his visit was the evacuation of the peninsula, which was carried out later with dramatic suddenness and complete success.

After inspecting the Allied lines at Salonika, Kitchener proceeded to Athens, where he had an important meeting with the King of Greece, to whom he made known the policy of the British Government. He had also a long interview with M. Skouloudis, the Greek Prime Minister. The attitude of King

and Government might not have been all that was desired by the Allies, but there could be no doubt about the friendly feelings of the masses of the Greek public. In the streets of Athens crowds gathered and cheered Kitchener, for whom they had the warmest admiration and respect.

On his way home Kitchener paid a visit to Italy, and went over part of the front on the middle and lower Isonzo. King Victor Emmanuel of Italy received him at the army head-quarters, and conferred upon him the Grand Cross of the Military Order of Savoy. Earlier in the year he had been decorated by the French President and by the King of the Belgians, who conferred upon him the high distinction of the Grand Cordon of the Order of Leopold. In the Royal Birthday honour list of 1915 it was recorded that His Majesty King George had conferred a Knighthood of the Garter on "Earl Kitchener of Khartoum, K.P., G.C.B., O.M., G.C.S.I., G.C.M.G., G.E.I.E."

Kitchener was not without his critics at home. The general attitude of his countrymen, however, was expressed on one occasion in the House of Lords by Lord Selborne, who said:—

Lord Kitchener joined the Cabinet as a soldier and not as a politician, and he must be left to do his work in his own way without jogging his elbow and asking him to do it in a different manner.

Mr. Balfour, in a brief tribute to his work, said on one occasion: "To praise Lord Kitchener's armies, as they are called, the armies which his genius has raised for the war, is superfluous".

When the scheme of voluntary recruiting, which was ultimately delegated to the care and direction of Lord Derby, had been tested to its utmost and yielded fine results, a great new army was raised. The military needs of the country, however, exceeded in time the response made to the call for recruits. It was then found necessary to enact a Parliamentary measure for the compulsory service of unmarried men. This revolutionary Act, which was accepted by the country with equanimity, was followed ere long by a further measure which made married men under forty-one liable also for military duties.

Kitchener's greatest work for his country was this raising of the British army to the scale of the armies of the Continental Powers. He had inspired the country with his spirit of self-sacrifice and his devotion to the State. He trusted the people, and the people trusted the great soldier. "If Kitchener wants compulsion", it had been said on all hands, "we shall consent to it." In the end he asked for this national sacrifice, and his wish was granted by Parliament and the people.

Then suddenly, in his hour of triumph, he was taken away. He had set out on a voyage to Russia by the county cruiser *Hampshire*, which was to steam to the port of Archangel. Russia was ready to welcome the great emissary of its ally, and no representative of Britain would have made a deeper impression on the Russian public than the tall, dignified soldier who had done so much to strengthen the forces opposed to the common enemy, and had spoken forth in such wise and far-seeing manner regarding the accomplishments

and valour of the Tsar's armies and the superb leadership of its generals.

The *Hampshire*, however, never left Scottish waters. As it steamed along the western shores of the Orkney Islands it struck a German mine and went down. Only twelve survivors escaped from the ill-fated vessel, and the victims included Earl Kitchener.

A heavy gale was blowing, and seas broke over the cruiser when, between 7.30 and 7.45 p.m., she struck a mine in the deep trough of a wave. This is said to have been one of several mines which, having been laid there many months before, were covered with barnacles. They had sunk deep in the water, and the storm had raised the one which the *Hampshire* struck.

Lord Kitchener appeared on deck immediately after the explosion took place. He was accompanied by a naval officer, who called: "Make way for Lord Kitchener!" Both walked up to the quarter-deck.

Captain Savill, commander of the cruiser, was engaged making preparations to lower boats and rafts. A survivor tells that the captain called upon Lord Kitchener to enter a boat, but owing to the noise of wind and sea his lordship did not hear him. "I saw him", he continues, "walking up and down talking to two of his officers. All three were wearing khaki without overcoats. . . . Lord Kitchener did not seem to be the least perturbed, but calmly waited the preparations for abandoning the ship, which were going on in a quiet, steady, and orderly way."

All the members of the crew stood at their posts. They did their best to lower the boats, but owing to

the rough sea none could be lowered safely. Those that were got out were smashed at once.

Meanwhile the *Hampshire*, which was settling down by the bows, heeled over to starboard.

Three rafts were launched, and some of those who boarded them before and after the ship sank were the only survivors. A number of sailors sat in the boats which could not be lowered, believing that these would float when the ship was going under. The *Hampshire*, however, turned a complete somersault forward, and carried the boats down with her.

When the survivor who was the last to see Kitchener in life sprang on to a raft, he saw the great soldier still standing on the quarter-deck talking to his officers. "I won't say he did not feel the strain of the perilous situation like the rest of us," this man has said, "but he gave no outward sign of nervousness, and from the little time that elapsed between my leaving the ship and her sinking I feel certain that Lord Kitchener went down with her, standing on the deck at the time."

The cold was intense, and many of the drenched and half-clad men perished on the rafts. On one alone there were forty-three dead sailors. Another raft dashed against the rocks when it drifted shoreward, and a number were killed outright or drowned in the billowy swell.

The news of the loss of the *Hampshire* and the death by drowning of Lord Kitchener caused a deep and painful sensation throughout the British Empire. There were signs of genuine grief on every hand, but none felt dismay. Kitchener had finished his greatest

task, and died when the military strength of his country was reaching full development. In Paris, where he was called "the brain of the British army", his death, a correspondent has recorded, "came with as great a shock as if General Joffre had been killed".

Indeed "a thrill ran through the world," as a Buenos Ayres newspaper put it, for "Britain had lost the man of his time—Kitchener—the hero of all the great recent Colonial campaigns, the virile, imperious, energetic soldier, the illustrious Field-Marshal". This paper, *La Nacion*, regarded the loss of Kitchener "as a personal calamity, as a great misfortune to ourselves," and added: "It is in the days of Britain's great sorrows that the world realizes how much it owes and how much it loves that mighty country. Apostle of progress, of civilization, and of liberty, she diffuses force and wealth wherever her influence extends, and everywhere evokes and displays the most fertile energies."

So passed away one of Britain's grandest soldiers, its twentieth-century "organizer of victory".

One of the finest and most interesting tributes to his memory has appeared in a French war journal, from the trenches, named *Le Mouchoir* (The Handkerchief), and described as "organe du peril (ah! rions!) et des poilus de la — Division (the voice of danger—ha, we laugh!—and of the soldiers of — Division)." The tribute is in the form of a poem by "Colonel X", entitled *Hommage au Général Kitchener*, and the following is a rendering of it:—

He's dead, . . . but then his death was worthy of his life.

Ah! he is one of those we mourn and envy too.

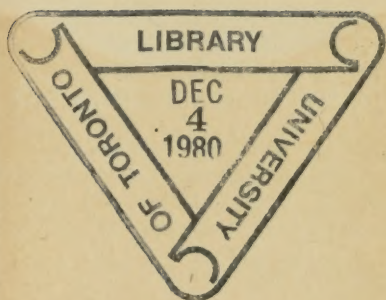
In History he lives ; he entered it through strife,
To dwell in it for aye, for glory is his due.
Deep in our children's hearts his mem'ry treasured be!
That they may know and feel the cost of victory.

Oh! Britain's hero needs the worthiest of graves,
No earth hole—a sea tomb, the noblest of all!
God his funeral planned. . . . A requiem sang the waves,
Cliffs were the organ pipes, the black sky was his pall,
For flowers he had foam-wreaths flashing white and fair,
And for funeral torches lightning in the air.

Hail! ye pale mourners gath'ring in the hour sublime
To honour at his death this hero of our time—
Ye ghosts of Nelson's seamen and of the *Vengeur*,¹ hail!
Oh! must we wait for long till vengeance shall prevail?

Ye voyagers of death! our hands are ready now
With flowers of a day to deck the hero's brow. . . .
But 't is the mighty voice of tempest on the sea
That shall repeat his name throughout eternity.

¹A famous French war-ship.



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